

**Determination of Need for Commercial Services within the
South Prince of Wales Wilderness Area**

**Craig Ranger District
Tongass National Forest**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Craig Ranger District (CRD), Tongass National Forest, developed this needs assessment (NA) to determine the type of outfitter/guide use that could take place in the South Prince of Wales Wilderness (SPOWW) 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/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 SPOWW area through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided hunting:

It is recommended that commercially guided hunting **be** authorized through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided freshwater fishing:

It is recommended that guided sport fishing be authorized through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided Passive Touring:

It is recommended that commercially guided Passive Touring **be** authorized through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided Active Touring:

It is recommended that commercially guided Active Touring **be** authorized through this needs assessment.

Francisco Sanchez
Craig District Ranger

Date

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Thorne Bay Ranger District

Tongass National Forest

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Date: April 2009

I. Introduction

The Craig Ranger District (CRD), Tongass National Forest, developed this needs assessment (NA) to determine the type of outfitter/guide use that could take place in the South Prince of Wales Wilderness (SPOWW) 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 91,018 acre Wilderness is one of the most remote wildernesses on the Tongass National Forest. A dense rain forest carpets the rugged mountains. Turbulent seas gradually lull into quiet bays. It's location on the southern tip of Prince of Wales Island, exposed to the open ocean swell of Dixon Entrance, makes access difficult. The protected bays and inlets of South Prince of Wales Wilderness are 30 miles south from Hydaburg and 65 miles from Craig.

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.). Camping appears to be shifting from some traditional locations to different locations. Fishing use at traditional sockeye streams has declined, but may increase if pressure on other systems increase.
 - 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 SPOWW area. While the area is quite large, access
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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.

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 on the SPOWW

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 in South Prince of Wales Wilderness Area from 2004-2009.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Total	194	280	213	395	352	382	1,816
FISHING	0	27	3	3	0	0	33
HUNTING	0	11	18	24	84	83	220
TOURING	194	242	192	368	268	299	1,563

The table shows the growth in popularity of guided hunting and passive touring in SPOW Wilderness from 2004 to 2009. This document determines whether there exists a need to offer these commercial activities but it defers to the Prince of Wales Carrying Capacity document to determine the extent and amount of use to allow in a given location.

Existing Condition

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

- ❖ Untrammled, 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. SPOW once contained an active cannery, boat works and native village, but evidence of these human developments are tough to pick out unless one looks for them.
- ❖ 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 black bear, Sitka black-tailed deer, and wolf. South Prince of Wales Island has some of the largest black bear in North America, making it a popular hunting destination. Local hunters and guides are concerned about black bear population number declines (Peacock, 2003). The list of smaller fur bearing animals common to the area include beaver, mink, pine marten, 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 2004. Due to the remoteness from human developments these two wilderness areas have relatively intact native plant communities. Small populations of non-native plants are primarily located at previously disturbed sites, such as near former cannery sites, boat works and traditional native use sites. The nearest roads are located in Cholmondeley Bay and Hydaburg to the northeast and northwest, consecutively.
- ❖ 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. Until 2009, an abandoned ADF&G cabin stood at the mouth of Klakas Lake. Two important private in-holdings are located within the SPOWW, the former Klinkwan Village located on the northwest end of Hunter Bay and the abandoned Hunter Bay Cannery site, located in the center of Hunter Bay. Little structural evidence is left at either site, yet protecting the historic value and integrity of these private sites from disturbance for Wilderness users is important to the Wilderness Management of the SPOWW. 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. Dixon entrance, the water body south of SPOWW also poses challenging water conditions for boats and planes. Floatplanes can land on

Klakas Lake, but occasionally ice and logjams prevent safe landings. . Except for access afforded from saltwater and lakes, the area is relatively inaccessible and undisturbed by the activities of people. The remoteness and challenge of accessing these areas has minimized human use. The majority of the guided use in the wilderness is passive touring in Hunter Bay and Klakas Inlet. These visitors, for the most part, are not staying overnight in the SPOWW area. Hunting, fishing and camping also take place in the protected bays of the SPOWW. Klakas Falls has been used as a traditional fish camp by people from Hydaburg. In general, the expectation is that there will be less evidence of human occupation as one travels farther in from the shoreline.

- ❖ 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 a bay, primarily trollers, seiners, or long liners. The waters around SPOWW are traditional Haida fishing grounds. Many fishermen from Hydaburg continue to fish the Klakas area commercially and for subsistence purposes. There are also occasional overflights of low flying aircraft. Shoreline areas are accessed by boat or floatplane giving the chance for wilderness visitors to encounter other users.

Current Management Direction in the SPOWW 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 SPOWW 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).
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. SPOWW areas of concern are Klakas Falls, and areas near private in-holdings in Hunter Bay. Some of the areas of concern listed above may be addressed through changes to outfitter and guide use, design parameters for developed recreation sites, and hardening sites to minimize recreation related impacts.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and Visitor Capacity in the SPOWW 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 SPOWW area consists of Primitive (P) and Semi-primitive non-Motorized (RM) ROS class (Appendix 2, description of "SPM" 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 2010, Outfitter Guide Carrying Capacity Analysis for Craig and Thorne Bay Ranger Districts

IV. Special Knowledge and Skills Needed for Activities in the SPOWW 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).

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.

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 SPOWW 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.
- 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?

SPOWW Niche and Description

The SPOWW area is located on the CRD of the Tongass National Forest. The niche statement for SPOWW describes the area as:

South Prince of Wales Wilderness is flexible and unconfined. Its dynamic landscape is not controlled by a single pattern; its character changes from tall peaks in the north to expansive lowlands and scattered islands in the south. The Haida, who once had villages and summer camps throughout this large area, moved seasonally with the availability of food. Since the beginning of the 20th century, South Prince of Wales has also seen canneries, villages and homesteads, which have all faded away, leaving behind only traces and the subtle evidence of change.

V. Need for and Extent of Commercial Use in the SPOWW 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.

Table 2. Determination of Need Factors Rating Table for Big Game Hunting, Freshwater Fishing, Camping, Passive Touring, 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. SPOW is a large area. Guides help hunters find prime hunting area for greatest success.
Knowledge	Moderate to High—guides can help clients find animals
Safety Risk	Moderate to high –SPOW is large and there is a real danger of getting lost.
Special Objectives	High-clients seek high quality hunts.
Demand/utilization	High—increased from 0 in 2004 to 83 in 2009. Average of 44 hunts/yr in the past 5 years. Although SPOW is a large area, the hunters are likely concentrating in the same prime hunting areas and potentially affecting solitude and naturalness (wildlife species).
Level of use and conflict	Moderate—no complaints have been received, but there is a growing perception that too many bears are being taken from SPOW. The ADF&G are working on managing the bear population, while the FS is concerned with maintaining wilderness character and providing a certain wilderness experience.
Land Capability	Moderate – large land area but prime hunting areas are located in specific places which may receive concentrated use.
Wilderness Dependency	Moderate—hunting could happen in other places, but hunting in a remote AK wilderness has its own special commercial draw.
Wilderness Character	Low to Moderate—large area but good hunting could be concentrated and the solitude component of character may be affected, yet hunting takes place in small groups and is a quiet activity so it is less likely to affect other groups. Gunshot noise travels far over water and there are a lot of large bays in SPOW.
Forest-wide Availability	Moderate: Productive hunting areas are available in non-wilderness areas but extensive non-roaded wilderness is harder to come by.
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 some skill to be successful.
Knowledge	Moderate to High—guides can help clients find quality fish
Safety Risk	Moderate—SPOW may have several bears on the streams.
Special Objectives	High-clients seek high quality fishing experience
Demand/utilization	Low—no requests for permits have been received for the past couple of years. Observations of streams have showed evidence of past use, but not a lot of evidence of recent use (e.g. Klakas Falls campsite not used for several years).
Level of use and conflict	Moderate—although use does not seem to be high right now, as pressure for fishing increases in other locations, such as Hatchery Creek or Sarkar, fishermen may move to more remote locations like SPOW. The potential for conflict between subsistence fishermen and commercial fisherman exists.
Land Capability	Moderate—SPOW is relatively large and has several streams but only a few of them produce sought after salmon species, popular for commercial outfitter and guides.
Wilderness Dependency	Moderate—freshwater fishing could happen outside of wilderness. Some visitors may seek a

Wilderness Character	wilderness experience where fishing in solitude and meeting wilderness challenges are main selling point of the trip.
Forest-wide Availability	Moderate—fishing is a fairly solitary activity. Fishermen tend to spread out on a stream. One guided group of five would probably cover a fair amount of a stream so if another group were to come at the same time, solitude would be affected.
Public Purpose	Moderate: Productive fishing areas are available in non-wilderness areas and much more easily accessible areas Moderate: Guides support recreation purposes of fishing but generally only a select group will participate (recreation and scenic purposes)
Camping	
Skills and Equipment	Moderate to High—equipment can be expensive. Takes skill to camp without creating an impact.
Knowledge	Moderate to High—guides can help clients practice leave no trace and camp on durable surfaces.
Safety Risk	Moderate—SPOW may have several bears and it is remote. Campers must prepare for extended stays.
Special Objectives	Moderate—camping tends to be an activity connected with another activity like hunting or fishing. Some visitors may have the objective of camping in wilderness and honing Leave No Trace skills.
Demand/utilization	Low—no requests for permits have been received. Evidence of camping exists in Hunter Bay, Klakas and Barrier Islands (see SPOW monitoring reports).
Level of use and conflict	Low—Not a lot of current use observed and no complaints received.
Land Capability	Moderate—large land area but most people want to camp in particular areas. If people do not practice Leave No Trace, then they may cause substantial impacts at campsite.
Wilderness Dependency	Moderate—camping can occur all over the Tongass, but wilderness camping, embracing its challenge and solitude is dependent on wilderness.
Wilderness Character	Moderate—may affect naturalness by leaving impacts if not camping on a durable surface. Fire rings and fire stains stay on the landscape for a long time.
Forest-wide Availability	Moderate: camping can occur in many places outside of wilderness. The same kind of remote, wilderness experience is less easily found outside of wilderness.
Public Purpose	Moderate: Guides support recreation purposes and could help visitors camp successfully. Only a select group will participate (recreation and scenic purposes)
Passive Touring	
Skills and Equipment	Low – little equipment needed (binoculars). Few skills needed if guided.
Knowledge	High—guides navigate to sites, identify wildlife and plants
Safety Risk	Low to moderate—generally passive touring is not dangerous, but there are inherent weather dangers applied to the activity especially since it would occur in a remote location.—No quick rescue.
Special Objectives	High-clients seek specific viewing opportunities.
Demand/utilization	High—Average of 336 passive tour days in SPOW between 2004-2008. Many people want to visit an AK wilderness just to see it for a brief time.
Level of use and conflict	Moderate—Use is high according to the O/g reports, but wilderness monitoring trips have not observed a great deal of use on the shore. Boats with clients are present in the bays, but few observations of people on shore and impacts to the shore have not been made.
Land Capability	High—visitors viewing from boats has no physical impact on the land. FS has not observed many physical impacts from visitors briefly landing on the shore. There is a large area for people to observe passively.
Wilderness Dependency	Moderate—passive touring is not necessarily wilderness dependent. There are several successful passive tours outside wilderness, but there can be tours built around providing Wilderness information and Leave no trace skills
Wilderness Character	Moderate—passive touring tends to allow larger group sizes which may have an increased affect on solitude. Conversely, passive touring may not set foot on land and thus may not cause physical impacts
Forest-wide Availability	Moderate: successful passive viewing must offer something interesting to view. There are sites outside of wilderness, but SPOW is a large area with several wildlife viewing opportunities in a remote and natural environment.
Public Purpose	Moderate: Guides support recreation purposes and bring people who would otherwise not be able to visit a wilderness to SPOW to observe it passively.
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 in order to remain safe while participating in Active touring activities

Safety Risk	High-potential dangerous weather, slow rescue.
Special Objectives	High—seeking wilderness challenge and solitude, often seeking marine mammals/birds to observe
Demand/utilization	Low—no requests for this activity at this time
Level of use and conflict	Low—no commercial active touring use and the FS has not observed any active touring during wilderness monitoring trips.
Land Capability	High—large area with many coves and inlets to explore. No concentration of use is expected or observed.
Wilderness Dependency	Moderate—active touring is offered in non-wilderness. But SPOW offers exceptional remoteness, solitude and challenge with interesting opportunities for kayaking and hiking.
Wilderness Character	Moderate—active touring in small groups is likely to have little impact on Wilderness character because it is dispersed, may not occur on land. Hiking may impact a small corridor.
Forest-wide Availability	Low – there are few locations where one may find the challenge, remoteness and solitude of SPOW.
Public Purpose	Moderate – only select group can afford or have the skill to participate

SPOW Wilderness is a relatively large and remote area. One must travel 65 miles from Craig and around the Cape Shaken from the east. Access is difficult and has limited the numbers of visitors to the wilderness. Most visitors to SPOW Wilderness come with an outfitter or guide or they are commercial or subsistence fishermen. Due to the diversity of bays, inlets, coves and barrier islands, visitors are able to disperse and not concentrate use in a couple of locations. Because of its remoteness and limited access, and because there are several locations for visitors to enjoy and find a quality recreation and wilderness experience, the Forest Service finds a need for all commercial activities in SPOW Wilderness. Outfitters and guides provide needed services to visitors aiding them to experience this unique Alaskan wilderness area.

VI. Summary

Statement defining the Wilderness Character of the SPOWW area

South Prince of Wales Wilderness is flexible and unconfined. Its dynamic landscape is not controlled by a single pattern; its character changes from tall peaks in the north to expansive lowlands and scattered islands in the south. The Haida, who once had villages and summer camps throughout this large area, moved seasonally with the availability of food. Since the beginning of the 20th century, South Prince of Wales has also seen canneries, villages and homesteads, which have all faded away, leaving behind only traces and the subtle evidence of change.

Description - This 91,018 acre wilderness is one of the most remote wildernesses on the Tongass. A dense rain forest carpets the rugged mountains. Turbulent seas gradually lull into quiet bays. Its location on the southern tip of Prince of Wales Island, exposed to the open ocean swell of Dixon Entrance, makes access difficult. The protected bays and inlets of South Prince of Wales Wilderness are 30 miles south from Hydaburg and 65 miles from Craig.

Specific information regarding the wilderness values which require monitoring or protection

Untrammled: assure a wild, free flowing, natural river.

Natural: no leaving litter or human waste in Wilderness.

Undeveloped: no more structures (outhouses, shelters, cabins).

Solitude: assure small group size

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 SPOWW area through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided hunting:

It is recommended that commercially guided hunting **be** authorized through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided freshwater fishing:

It is recommended that guided sport fishing be authorized through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided Passive Touring:

It is recommended that commercially guided Passive Touring **be** authorized through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided Active Touring:

It is recommended that commercially guided Active Touring **be** authorized through this needs assessment.

Greg Killinger
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 identifies 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 SPOWW 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.