

Analysis of the Management Situation

resulting in new demands. Some of the things that have changed or dramatically improved since the 1984 Plan was completed are: 1) mountain bikes; 2) improvements in back country equipment; 3) wind surfing; 4) jet skis; 5) snow boards; 6) improved ATV's and snowmobiles; 7) ultra-light aircraft; and 8) kayaking, to name a few.

Issues related to this include: 1) providing a range of recreation opportunities; 2) noise/quiet; 3) crowding; 4) fundamental differences in values; 5) allocation between commercial and noncommercial users; and 6) displacement of existing users or uses.

While we can not write standards or guidelines for activities that don't exist, the Revision needs to look at developing standards or guidelines that will help evaluate new recreation opportunities in the future as to their appropriateness within the Forest. Issues of motorized versus non-motorized, or noise, or wilderness, or value differences will always be present with any new activity. Management areas may be structured to allow for new or experimental recreation activities or some type of check list could be developed to analyze a new activity against existing uses for compatibility.

Revision Decision Space

Many of the recreation issues can not be resolved. The objective is to meet the needs of as many of the recreating public as possible. Differing values, conflicting or incompatible uses, and multiple parties, to name a few, can not be resolved. Alternatives need to be developed that provide a range of recreation opportunities for: 1) wilderness recommendations and management; 2) a range of recreation opportunities and settings (ROS); 3) areas available for motorized and non-motorized recreation (quiet); 4) commercial and noncommercial recreation activities; 5) options to provide increased developed recreation opportunities; and 6) alternatives that increase the utilization of the large unused dispersed recreation capacity. Along with the alternatives, Standards and Guidelines need to be developed for managing qualitative matters for the wilderness study area, management of non-wilderness areas, methods to analyze new recreation opportunities, allocating recreation special use permits, and development standards for developed and dispersed recreation opportunities. The revised plan needs to include specific monitoring requirements for recreation related activities using limits of acceptable change concepts or other appropriate methods for monitoring.

3. Roadless/Wilderness

Current Management Situation

Figure IV- 25 (following page) displays the different activities and uses that may be conducted within proposed or designated wilderness areas and wilderness study areas. Wilderness areas in Alaska are subject to the provisions of ANILCA and there is less restriction on the use of snowmobiles, motorboats and aircraft than wilderness areas only subject to the Wilderness Act.

Figure IV-26: Summary of Acreage Figures for Roadless Area

Inventory	Roadless Acres
1997 RARE II	3,849,020
1984 Forest Plan	5,434,000
1996 Inventory	5,376,400
Total Forest Acres (GIS)	5,493,380

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Figure IV-25 Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas Activities

	Wilderness Act Applies	ANILCA Applies (1)	Fixed-wing airplanes, snowmachines, motorboats & nonmotorized surface transportation	Other motorized or mechanized use (mtn. bikes, ATV's, chainsaws, etc)	Helicopter Landings	Minerals	Fish Habitat Improvement & Facilities	Wildlife Habitat Improvement	Cabins	Trails
ANILCA Designated WSA (2) (Chugach NF)	No	Yes	Yes, but limited to traditional activities, access to homesites & villages	No, except for admin of areas, search & rescue, and a few other activities allowed by ANILCA (fish enhancement, navigation aids and communication sites)	No, except may be allowed at documented pre-existing landing sites prior to designation of WSA, admin. of area, & search & rescue	Yes. Access to ad development of existing claims and staking of new claims	Yes, but must be consistent with wilderness character	No	Replace existing, new must be for public health & safety	Yes
ANILCA Designated Wilderness (Tongass NF)	Yes	Yes	Yes, but limited to traditional activities, access to homesites & villages	No, except for admin of areas, search & rescue, and a few other activities allowed by ANILCA (fish enhancement, navigation aids and communication sites)	No, except for admin of area as wilderness, search & rescue, and as specifically allowed in ANILCA	Limited access to and development of existing claims only or as specifically allowed in ANILCA	Yes, but must be consistent with wilderness character	No	Replace existing, new must be for public health & safety	Yes
Recommended Wilderness within WSA	No	Yes	Yes, but limited to traditional activities, access to homesites & villages	No, except for admin of areas, search & rescue, and a few other activities allowed by ANILCA (fish enhancement, navigation aids and communication sites)	No, except may be allowed at documented pre-existing landing sites prior to designation of WSA, admin. of area, & search & rescue	Yes. Access to ad development of existing claims and staking of new claims, unless specifically withdrawn at time revised Forest Plan ROD is signed	Yes, but must be consistent with wilderness character	No	Replace existing, new must be for public health & safety	Yes
Recommended Wilderness outside WSA (3)	No	Yes	Yes, but limited to traditional activities, access to homesites & villages	No, except for admin of areas, search & rescue, and a few other activities allowed by ANILCA (fish enhancement, navigation aids and communication sites)	No, except documented pre-existing landing sites at time revised Forest Plan ROD signed, admin of area, & search & rescue	Yes. Access to ad development of existing claims and staking of new claims, unless specifically withdrawn at time revised Forest Plan ROD is signed	Yes, but must be consistent with wilderness character	No	Replace existing, new must be for public health & safety	Yes
Wilderness (Lower 48)	Yes	No	No, except that specifically allowed thru legislation	No	No, except for that specifically allowed thru legislation	Limited access to and development of valid existing claims or as allowed thru legislation	No	No	No	Yes

(1) ANILCA provided several specific exceptions to the Wilderness Act of 1964.

(2) The Nellie Juan/College Fjord Wilderness Study Area (WSA) was established on December 2, 1980 in the Alaska National Interest Conservation Act (ANILCA). Regional policy and the current Forest Plan is to "maintain the then existing wilderness character" [1908] pending Congressional action on designating wilderness.

(3) It is assumed that any recommendation for wilderness outside of current ANILCA designated areas would be managed under the provisions of ANILCA.

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The existing Forest Plan identified 92 percent of the Forest as being available for Wilderness evaluation. The only areas not evaluated were areas immediately adjacent to the existing roads, the Resurrection roadless area and the Eastern Kenai Mountains area around Snow River.

Comparison of acreage figures between the RARE II inventory, Forest Plan and the Revision process are not particularly meaningful. The inventories were conducted at different times, with different criteria, with a different land base and with different levels of mapping technology and accuracy. The Figure IV-26 is a summary of acreage figures for roadless areas calculated during each inventory effort.

Using an inventory process that classified all areas greater than 5,000 acres and ¼ mile away from existing roads, 98 percent of the Forest is inventoried as roadless. The inventory did not include areas that are in the process of being added to the Forest by the *Exxon Valdez* Trustee Council

In 1980 the Alaska Lands Act identified 1,972,200 acres (2,116,000 acres in the Forest Plan) to be reviewed by the Secretary of Agriculture to determine the suitability or nonsuitability for preservation as wilderness (See Map 6, pg. 45). The Forest Plan recommended 1,703,000 acres for wilderness designation, 48,200 acres of which are outside the Wilderness Study Area (See Map 6, pg. 45). In addition the first amendment to the Forest Plan requires 64,600 acres in the Russian River/Resurrection River drainages, the Hinchinbrook Island Management Area totaling 152,000 acres, and about 152,000 acres in the Eastern Copper River/Martin River area be managed to maintain a Primitive II Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS). Timber related road construction for access to National Forest timber is not allowed in these areas.

Since the Forest Plan was implemented only the special-use permit road on Montague Island has significantly changed acres available for roadless classification. There have been only a small number of timber sales where temporary roads have encroached into inventoried roadless areas. These roads are temporary, were not designed for passenger vehicles, and the road density does not preclude the area from being inventoried for roadless designation.

Need to Establish or Change Management Direction

Conflicting public comments on roadless area management and potential wilderness designation indicate a need to clarify management direction for roadless areas not recommended for wilderness designation.

Revision Decision Space

Recommendations for wilderness could range from zero to 98 percent of the Forest. Roadless areas not allocated to wilderness could be allocated to any of the full spectrum of multiple uses, including maintaining their roadless character. While the area recommended for wilderness may change in the revised Forest Plan, the ANILCA designated Wilderness Study Area will continue to be managed to maintain its wilderness values until Congress acts. Alternatives may span the full breadth of this large “decision space”.

Options for managing the inventoried roadless areas may be limited by a new policy on roadless areas being developed by the Administration.

4. Transportation

Current Management Situation

The Kenai Peninsula has the largest population base on the Forest, including the relatively close Municipality of Anchorage. The principal mode of transportation is land-based, including state highways;

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Figure IV-27: Miles of Road by Type and Forest Area

Road Type	Kenai Peninsula	Prince William Sound	Copper River Drainage	Total Miles
State Highway	95	0	0	95
Forest Highway	32	0	27	59
Forest Development Road-Maintenance Level 1	3	0	0	3
Forest Development Road-Maintenance Level 2	13	0	12	25
Forest Development Road-Maintenance Level 3-5	53	0	13	66
Non-system Forest Service Road	0	34	0	34
Potential Roads	226	346	168	740

several forest roads; hiking and off-road vehicle trails; and railroad (See Map 1, pg. 2). In Prince William Sound, the principal modes of transportation are the Alaska Marine Highway System, commercial and private water craft and commercial and private aircraft. The Copper River drainage has one population center, Cordova, with scattered population of the remainder of the area. There is one short public highway and some local low-standard roads. Cordova is accessible by commercial aircraft and State ferries. Other areas are accessible by charter and private aircraft and watercraft.

Within the Forest boundary there are 94 miles of forest development roads: 69 miles within the Kenai Peninsula and 25 miles within the Copper River drainage. Forest development roads are maintained at five levels, with 1 being the highest level of maintenance and 5 being the least.

The Forest has one non-system road (34 miles) located on Montague Island in Prince William Sound which is being obliterated. Potential roads are roads that could be developed if there were resource production demand.

Existing Trail System

There are about 456 miles of system trails in the Forest. The trails may variously accommodate hiking, horseback, mountain biking, and snowcraft activities. The Seward Ranger District with 278 miles, has the largest proportion (60 percent) of the total forest trail mileage, followed by the Cordova Ranger District with 119 miles (26 percent), and the Glacier Ranger District with 60 miles (13 percent). Many of the trails are less than two miles in length. The longest trails are located in the Seward District, including the Resurrection Pass, Johnson Pass, and Russian Lakes Trails.

Figure IV-28: Miles of Trail by Type and Ranger District

Type	Trail Information	Cordova RD	Glacier RD	Seward RD	Forest Total
Existing	Number of Trails	79	46	67	---*
	Miles Maintained	37.2	18.7	166.4	222.3
	Miles Not Maintained	82.2	41.7	109.3	233.2
	Total	119.4	60.4	275.7	455.5
	Mean Length	1.5	1.3	4.1	---*
Proposed	Number of Trails	24	4	0	---*
	Miles	51.8	10.2	0	152.0
	Mean Length	2.2	2.61	0	152.0

* Total number and mean length of trails not shown because a trail extends across district boundaries.

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Alaska Railroad

The State of Alaska operates the Alaska Railroad between Anchorage and Seward, including a short spur line to Whittier. The railroad is an alternative form of transportation to the Seward Highway between Anchorage and Seward. However, the single track to Whittier is currently the only land route connecting that community with other communities on the Kenai Peninsula. Most travelers, vehicles, small boats, and tour buses depend upon the railroad for their access to Prince William Sound. In 1995, it was estimated that the railroad accommodated over 205,000 recreation visits to the Sound.

Alaska Marine Highway System

The State of Alaska operates the Alaska Marine Highway System within Prince William Sound. Ferries variously connect the key Prince William Sound access communities of Seward, Whittier and Valdez. There is an opportunity to nominate additional roads for Scenic Byway status. There is a need to provide clear direction on how Forest development roads and trails will be managed and maintained for public access.

In 1996, the State proposed that the Seward Highway be nominated as an “All-American Road,” one of the most prestigious recognition’s that can be given to a public highway. Status as an All-American Road could place restrictions on management of adjacent Forest land.

Revision Decision Space

While demand for access to and within the Forest can be expected to increase from many different sources and locations, special concerns should be given to the potential effects on Prince William Sound through Whittier.

Management actions to respond to projected increases in, and possible impacts of, demand for access will be limited primarily by the following:

- Jurisdictional limitations of the Forest to manage road and corridor development that may affect Forest settings and attractions, if not management plans.
- Marketing operations of state and private interests that increase demand (or traffic).
- Cruise ship operations that may redirect highway traffic from Seward to Whittier and introduce additional traffic to Valdez and Cordova.

The Revised Forest Plan can develop guidelines for determining when and where roads and trails would be open to motorized access. It can also allocate certain areas to non-motorized use, including use by aircraft. The Forest will want to maintain the flexibility to quickly respond to changing uses and resource concerns through the use of special regulations. By not specifically allocating areas to be open to any type of overland recreational vehicle or motorized use the Forest can manage these uses without having to amend the Forest Plan every time a situation arises that requires a change in use patterns.

D. Natural Resource Production

1. Forest Products

Under the Forest Plan, the Forest operates a sustained-yield timber program to meet public demand for a range of forest products including sawtimber, poles, cabin logs, firewood, pulp logs, chip logs, Christmas trees, wildlings, seedlings, tree cones, fungi, shrubs and other plants. Forest product raw materials are conveyed to the public via commercial timber sales, personal use permits, and Alaska free use permits.