

## TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE-FOREST SERVICE

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### Prince of Wales Outfitter and Guide Management Plan Environmental Assessment released

**CRAIG and THORNE BAY, Alaska**—The Craig and Thorne Bay District Rangers have released the Prince of Wales (POW) Outfitter and Guide Management Plan Environmental Assessment (OG EA). The OG EA considered four alternatives: the No Action, Proposed Action, and two alternatives based on public input during scoping. Copies of the EA are available on the internet at <http://go.usa.gov/Pze>.

The rangers are seeking public input on how to allocate recreation use to outfitters and guides on the Craig and Thorne Bay Ranger Districts. The ranger districts cover more than 2.3 million acres and include the communities of Coffman Cove, Craig, Hydaburg, Kasaan, Klawock, and Thorne Bay on POW Island. The project area includes only National Forest System (NFS) lands and does not cover any state or privately owned land.

The OG EA looks at 209 recreation use areas that have been or are being used by outfitters or guides. Since outfitters and guides are not limited to these areas, the assessment looks at all NFS lands for both districts. A legal notice will be printed in the *Ketchikan Daily News*, which will start the official 30-day comment period for this project. Those wishing to have standing for appeals should be sure to comment during that comment period.

The OG EA does not set limits on those people visiting the Tongass National Forest without an outfitter or a guide (unguided visitors). Unguided visitors can continue to enjoy POW recreation and subsistence opportunities in the same way they do now. The district rangers also did not address construction of resorts, cabins, tent platforms, or any other structure or facility in the OG EA.

There is some level of uncertainty in describing and analyzing recreational use. Due to conditions varying from weather to wildlife sightings to the state of financial markets, the location, type, and amount of recreational use in any area changes irregularly. To address uncertainty, the OG EA includes adaptive management, which works by monitoring and adjusting actions to meet desired outcomes.

The district rangers will document their allocation decision in a Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact in the summer of 2012. Their decision relies, in part, on public comments to the OG EA.

If you have questions about this project, please contact Sue Jennings, Team Leader, at 907-723-0477 or at [sjennings@fs.fed.us](mailto:sjennings@fs.fed.us).