



# Saltwater Shoreline-based Outfitter Guide Analysis

The Forest Service will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to respond to outfitter and guide (O/G) requests to operate on the northern part of the Tongass National Forest (including Admiralty Island National Monument, and Hoonah, Juneau, and Sitka Ranger Districts). This process originally began in October 1998 as an Environmental Assessment (EA). Due to the complexity of the issues and interest in the project, the decision has been made to prepare an EIS, which requires an additional scoping process. Comments received during the original EA scoping period have been analyzed and will be brought forward for analysis in the EIS. As an important part of this continued process, we are asking for *additional* input regarding issues related to this project. This scoping announcement briefly summarizes information from the Proposed Action and Carrying Capacity Analysis which were distributed in their entirety with the EA scoping letter. If you would like an additional copy of either of these documents, please see our website:

[www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/management\\_news/planning/oganalysis.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/management_news/planning/oganalysis.html)

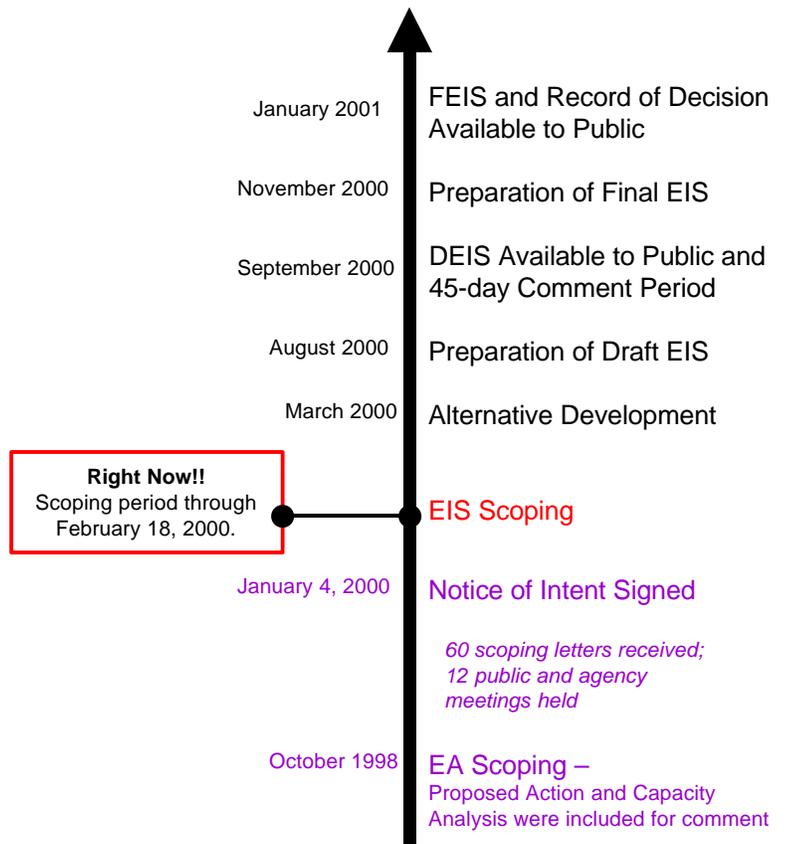
or contact us and a copy will be sent to you. This announcement also highlights where the process is now, where we are headed, and summarizes preliminary issues. We would like your comments on any issues related to the proposal, the carrying capacity analysis, or the current issues the team has identified.



**Project Area**

The analysis will include the saltwater shoreline National Forest uplands of the **Hoonah** and **Sitka Ranger Districts** in their entirety, the **Juneau Ranger District** excluding Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness, and **Admiralty National Monument District** excluding Mitchell, Kanalku, and Favorite Bays and immediate environs, and the Pack Creek Zoological Area.

## Process Timeline



## Purpose and Need

Recreation and tourism are increasing on the Tongass National Forest. Outfitters and guides are important partners with the Forest Service in providing recreation experiences to those who prefer to use a commercial guide or those who cannot experience the Tongass independently. Tourism is also growing in importance to the economy of Southeast Alaska. At the same time, some people are concerned that increased commercial use might compromise the values which they feel are important, such as solitude, opportunities for primitive or semi-primitive experiences, and access to fish and wildlife (either for viewing or hunting/fishing).

The purpose and need for the Proposed Action is to provide for guided recreation opportunities at levels that are consistent with the capabilities of the Land Use Designations as identified in the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (TLRMP).

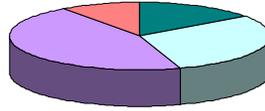
The goal is to allow quality recreation experiences sought by both guided and non-guided users of the National Forest that will not unacceptably impact forest resources.

The decision to be made by the Tongass Assistant Forest Supervisor is whether to authorize saltwater shoreline-based outfitter-guide operations for a period of up to five years, and, if so, at what levels of use for specific areas. The Assistant Forest Supervisor will also decide whether to amend the TLRMP to allocate use levels for long-term management of commercial outfitting and guiding.



## Our Process

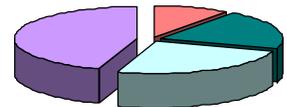
In order to allocate *commercial* use of recreation capacity we first need to find out what the total (commercial and non-commercial) recreation carrying capacity of the project area is.



### How big is the Pie?

This was done in 1998 by the Forest in a separate analysis\* which was available for review and comment with the Proposed Action.

Now, total capacity can be allocated to commercial and non-commercial uses.



### How big is My Piece of the Pie?

In October 1998, we developed a Proposed Action to allocate commercial use.

This Proposed Action\* would provide commercial allocation ranging from 10 to 40 percent of the total recreation capacity depending on considerations including; distance to communities, subsistence use and other potential impacts to resources. The remainder (60 to 90 percent) would be open for non-commercial use. Brown bear guides would be allocated 80 percent of the commercial capacity during both spring and fall bear hunting seasons, and other non-hunting O/G's the remaining commercial capacity.



\*These documents are available on the website, or by request.

We received almost 60 comments identifying issues about the Proposed Action and Carrying Capacity Analysis. These comments, and those we receive during the current scoping period, will be our focus as we move forward to develop a range of alternatives to the proposed action.

If you already commented during our first scoping period, your comments will be carried through the process – you do not need to submit them again.

## Our Saltwater Shoreline-based Recreation Activities:

-  Occur above mean high tide on National Forest system lands
-  Generally occur within ¼ to ½ mile of the saltwater shoreline or up streams accessed from the shoreline
-  Are generally dispersed and of a remote nature
-  Are generally accessed by boat with some floatplane activity
-  Include but are not limited to: sightseeing, hiking, photography, boating, hunting, and fishing
-  Often boats are used as base facilities and for sleeping when activities are not day trips
-  If camping occurs, primitive tent camping is the norm and leave-no-trace practices utilized
-  Do not include O/G activities that utilize tent frames or other temporary facilities, or the use of helicopters or wheeled planes.

# What We've Heard So Far

Issues are points of discussion, debate, or dispute.

Preliminary issues from the EA scoping comments have been identified by the team and are summarized here for your review. Issues may be added or redefined as we analyze your additional scoping comments. All key issues will be used in the development of alternatives, in considering mitigation measures, and in the analysis of environmental effects.

## Commercial O/G Operation Conflicts

- ✗ Conflicts arise between groups due to differences in activities, numbers of clients, and size of boat/operation.
- ✗ Large operations tend to displace smaller groups, and often have a greater social impact on other groups.
- ✗ Larger boats are limited in locations they can use due to anchorages and shoreline access.
- ✗ The places larger boats use tend to be popular with smaller O/G operators and non-commercial users.
- ✗ Several comments requested places be identified for specific types of operations.

## Economic Opportunities and Potential Impacts

- \$ Concerns by commercial operators of the impacts allocations may have to their business capacity.
- \$ Different allocation levels will impact operations in different ways; any allocation or commercial limits should be sensitive to O/G financial needs.
- \$ Brown bear O/Gs have a fixed season to work within.
- \$ There was general agreement that some sort of limit or allocation is needed, but little agreement on what those limits or allocations should be by season, area or activity.

## Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Timing

Concerns for protection of the resources being used commercially; brown bear, fish, and their habitat.  
Desire for protection of important wildlife forage and feeding areas.

## Commercial Use vs. Non-Commercial Use

- 🏠 Residents are feeling displaced and crowded with the increase in commercial use.
- 🏠 Some communities are interested in maintaining control over the commercial use and development in their local area.
- 🏠 Some comments requested commercial-free zones around communities to support local resident recreation and subsistence users.

## Other Important Issues

There were several issues raised that the team identified as important to the process, but would not vary by alternative, and would be considered consistently through the process.

- ❖ Size and Number of Analysis Areas
  - Additional sub-areas will be identified and used for analysis in all alternatives.
- ❖ Monitoring and Enforcement
  - The selected alternative will include plans for monitoring and enforcing allocation of commercial use.
- ❖ Subsistence
  - All alternatives will consider and, if necessary, mitigate for effects on subsistence resource uses.
- ❖ Clarification of Methods, Definitions, and Capacity Analysis
  - All alternatives will be analyzed and compared using consistent methods and definitions.

## Issues not Considered In This Analysis

*The use of local guides vs. "outside" guides.* A number of community residents were interested in maintaining O/G economic opportunities for local use to support of community employment and sustainability. ANILCA 1307 does allow for local, historic and Native Corporation preference in Conservation System Units (CSU's). CSU's include Congressionally-designated Wilderness and National Forest Monuments. Preference allowed by ANILCA 1307 does not apply to guided sport hunting or fishing.

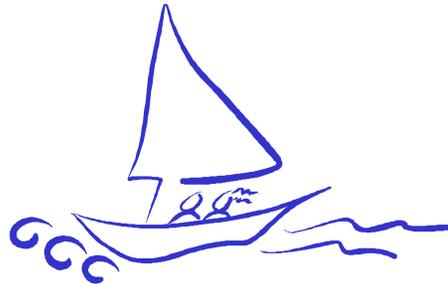
*Include State waters and tidelands when planning for upland activities.* This request is outside the scope of the project, as the Forest Service does not have authority to manage State waterways.

# We Want Your Comments !!



Please send your comments on the Saltwater Shoreline-based Outfitter Guide Proposed Action, the Carrying Capacity Analysis, or the enclosed identified issues. The scoping period will be open through February 18, 2000.

Written comments should be sent to:  
Sitka Assistant Forest Supervisor  
Tongass National Forest  
Outfitter Guide Analysis  
P.O. Box 21628  
Juneau, AK 99802  
Attention: Julie Schaefers – Team Leader



You may also directly comment or request information through electronic mail to: [jschaefers/r10@fs.fed.us](mailto:jschaefers/r10@fs.fed.us). Comments and requests for information can also be submitted by phone by contacting Julie Schaefers at 907-586-8796 or Marti Marshall at 907-747-4234.



No additional public meetings are planned for this scoping period. If you would like a public meeting or presentation – please contact us.

Documents and information can also be found on the project website:  
[www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/management news/planning/oganalysis.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/management%20news/planning/oganalysis.html)

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