

NEPA PROCEDURES HANDBOOK
CHAPTER 10 - ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

11 - Interdisciplinary Approach

The purposes of this supplement are to: (1) set forth the required steps in the IDT planning process to be followed on the Stikine Area; (2) clarify the documentation necessary throughout the process; and (3) provide guidelines for preparation and review of the documentation.

Before initiating action, see Section 12 for discussion of projects which may not require full planning process treatment. Section 12.1 should be reviewed prior to developing the initial direction. Section 33.1 should be reviewed prior to selecting the team leader.

11.1 - Initial Line Direction to the IDT Leader

This is the first step in initiating the IDT project. It notifies the team leader of his assignment as team leader and provides clear direction allowing him to begin the project. The line officer should not expect the team leader to initiate action until adequate direction is provided in writing.

The line officer should consider the following items in preparing the initial direction letter:

1. A description of the purpose and need for the proposed action including linkage to the Program Plan and Budget. A Project Work Plan (Form 1900-4) should be attached to the initial direction letter. Helpful background information should also be included, pointing out any significant preliminary work done to date (Position Statement perhaps), and potential problems, etc. The relationship of the project to the Forest Plan and Management Area Direction should be stated.
2. The interdisciplinary approach to be used in terms of IDT membership and complexity of the necessary analysis; a listing of the principal and supporting disciplines required; and the names of core team and other members whenever possible.
3. Identification of the responsible official, who the team leader reports progress to and receives interim decisions from, and how these contacts are to be made and documented. Reference should be made to Chapter 11, Exhibit 2 of this handbook.
4. Goals and objectives should be clearly stated in order to establish the range of alternatives to be considered, and to identify any specific alternatives that may be required.
5. Guidance to the team should be as specific as possible. Normally included will be critical dates for team accomplishment, anticipated public and other agency involvement needs, and any other direction needed to complete the analysis actions (such as the need for specific kinds or levels of additional data).

6. The team leader should be referred to pertinent manual or handbook direction such as FSH 1909.15 (Chapters 10, 20, 30).

11.2 - Initial Study Plan Tasks

The second step in the process is the initial IDT preparation of items 2 and 3 of the study plan (Sec. 11.4 of this supplement) and an assessment of the need for public and other agency involvement in the scoping process. Additional work on the study plan may proceed while scoping is under way, but the study plan can only be finalized after public and other agency responses have been received and analyzed.

11.3 - Scoping Process

The third step assures introduction of the proposal to affected publics and cooperating agencies early in the planning process.

Scoping disseminates information about the proposal and required analysis, and describes the initial Forest Service assessment of significant public issues, management concerns, and opportunities (ICO's) to be addressed through the IDT process. It solicits input and assistance from interested and affected publics in further defining or validating the ICO's, establishing the range of alternatives to be considered, and determining the criteria to be used in evaluating alternatives.

Analysis of scoping input provides the information needed to complete the study plan with some assurance that all significant aspects of the proposal have been identified.

In completing the study plan, scoping input is used to: identify the need for additional public and other agency involvement during the planning process (study plan item 4); help determine the scope and define the focus of the IDT effort (study plan item 5); and aid the decisionmaker and IDT in determining data needs, and establishing or validating a reasonable range of alternatives to be considered (study plan item 6).

Although scoping is an essential part of any environmental analysis, the procedures will vary depending on the nature and location of the proposed project, and on the individuals, organizations and other agencies that may be affected.

See Section 31.1 for guidance in determining the level and extent of scoping required; and in selecting scoping procedures appropriate to the planning effort.

11.4 - Study Plan Preparation

The study plan serves as a contract between the line officer and the IDT leader for completing the necessary analysis within an agreed-to time frame and according to agreed-to standards. The study plan is prepared by the IDT leader with the help of the ID team. It is signed by the responsible official and the IDT leader. If the responsible official is the Forest Supervisor and the IDT leader is a District employee, the District Ranger will also sign. The study plan may be amended over the life of the analysis to account for new data or unforeseen circumstances.

The study plan should include the following elements:

1. Title and signature page.
2. Project description and location.
3. Background information.
4. Public and other agency involvement needs.
5. Scope of the project.
6. Criteria for completing the analysis actions.
7. Timetable for getting the job done.
8. Maps as needed.
9. Appendix.

1. Title and Signature Page. The title page must provide for signatures and dates by the IDT leader, the responsible official, and any other line officer with delegated responsibility for the planning effort.

2. Project Description and Location. The project should be clearly described. The purpose and need for the action must be stated. Much of the information required should be available in the letter of direction from the line officer to the IDT leader. The location description should include identification of the VCU's and Management Areas within the study area. A map of the study area should be included.

3. Background Information. The purpose of this section of the study plan is to briefly describe what is known about the study area in terms of potential resource and use conflicts, opportunities, and the affected physical and biological environment. In the case of a timber sale, this information should be available from the Position Statement and/or the Area data base.

TLMP direction (including Management Area Direction) must be reviewed and any potential problems with this direction should be stated. The need to verify any wildlife habitat retention recommended by TLMP Management Area Analysis must be set forth. See FSM 1920, R10 ID No. 5.

The need for permits, rights-of-way, etc., should be stated.

4. Public and Other Agency Involvement Needs. This section should begin with a description of the scoping procedures used, and include a brief summary of input received, in order to document public and other agency involvement early in the planning process. The input summary should describe in appropriate detail how much and what kinds of input were received (i.e., volume of written responses, number of meetings and personal contacts, etc., and the general categories of interest and concern expressed), and an indication of input sources (individuals, groups, agencies; local, regional, national).

Needs and/or opportunities for additional public involvement should follow, based on the information in 2 and 3 above, and on the analysis of public and other agency response through the scoping process.

In developing study plan procedures for informing and involving the various publics during the planning process, consideration should be given to the need for public meetings; mailing of information; consultation with persons and groups both within and external to the Forest Service; consultation and coordination with local, State, and other Federal agencies, and affected Native organizations.

At a minimum, these inform and involve procedures will assure that scoping respondents (and others who specifically request the information) will receive copies of the approved study plan and any subsequent amendments, as well as the EA and decision notice upon completion of the planning process and approval by the responsible official.

The amount of public involvement should, of course, be consistent with the scope of the action, interest expressed through the scoping process, and the need for coordination and cooperation with affected agencies, individuals, and groups. The Area Public Affairs Officer may be consulted in developing public involvement procedures.

If it is determined that the need for additional public involvement is minimal, and opportunities for input to the planning process will be limited, the rationale for this determination must be documented here.

5. Scope of the Project. This section identifies the public issues, management concerns, and opportunities to be addressed in the study, and the criteria to be used in evaluating alternatives. It must clearly reflect consideration of the scoping responses, and show how that input was used in defining the scope of the project through final selection of the ICO's and evaluation criteria. It may be appropriate to summarize the input, or present a brief content analysis, as background for the display of ICO's and evaluation criteria below.

Here is a suggested format for displaying ICO's selected for the study:

ICO'S TO BE CONSIDERED IN THIS STUDY:

1. Identify those ICO's from the scoping process which were validated by respondents, i.e., those the public and other agencies agreed with or did not comment on. (A brief explanation may be appropriate, if not already covered in the summary above.)
2. Identify additional ICO's suggested by the public which are accepted for the study. A brief explanation should be included, if not covered in the summary above.
3. ICO's from the scoping process which respondents disagreed with but which, nevertheless, will be retained in the study. An explanation of why each is being retained must be included.

ICO'S CONSIDERED BUT DROPPED FROM THIS STUDY:

Identify ICO's dropped from the original list and those suggested by respondents but not accepted for the study. An explanation of why each one was rejected must be included.

Criteria to be used in evaluating alternatives should also be listed here. If identification of evaluation criteria was a scoping objective, the selected (and rejected) criteria should be displayed in a manner similar to the ICO's.

Regardless of the scoping procedures used, or the input received, evaluation criteria must relate directly to the issues, concerns, and opportunities to be addressed in the study. This relationship should be made readily apparent either through the format used to display evaluation criteria, the use of a simple reference key to associated ICO's, or some other method.

6. Criteria for Completing the Analysis Actions. The purpose of this section of the study plan is to describe the work to be done and the rules or standards for doing the work. In preparing this section of the study plan, the roles of the participants in the environmental analysis process should be kept in mind. (See Chapter 10, Exhibit 2.)

Requirements should be developed for the following actions:

- a. Formulation of Alternatives.
- b. Data Collection and Organization.
- c. Data Analysis.
- d. Estimating Effects and Evaluation of Alternatives.

a. Formulation of Alternatives. One purpose of this section is to establish the bounds within which the alternatives will be developed. For timber sale projects, for example, limits might be established that set the volume range within which all alternatives will be developed, minimum system road construction to consider, etc.

This section could also specify that alternatives with certain objectives be developed. For example: at least one alternative might include a certain proportion of technically and/or economically marginal timber; at least one alternative might feature wildlife objectives; at least one alternative might maximize returns to the Treasury; one or more might focus on a specific public or community issue; etc.

b. Data Collection and Organization. This section should describe the kind and quality of data to be collected, where the data fits into the Area data base, and how the data will be entered into the Area data base. See FSM 1920.74, Stikine Area Supplement #1 (to be written) for information on data collection and storage.

Determination of data to be collected must be based on a data needs assessment which should identify:

1. Information required in order to make needed decisions.
2. Pertinent existing data on hand.
3. Pertinent additional data needed and the level of detail required.
4. Estimate of needs to gather the additional data, i.e., special expertise required, person days, equipment needed (boat and helicopter time, etc.), coordination with other agencies, etc.

The data needs assessment should be documented and included in the study plan appendix.

c. Data Analysis. This section deals with the kind and intensity of data analysis to be done (ordinarily by specialists) as input into the environmental analysis. It answers the questions of what resource reports are needed and what kind of information each report should contain. For example, the visual analysis may be by professional judgement, map cross sections, or computer techniques such as VIEWIT to determine seen area or PERSPECTIVE PLOT to display proposed clearcuts; transportation analysis may be by hand or by use of the TRANSHIP computer model; wildlife data analysis may be by professional judgement or may include some form of statistical analysis, etc.

d. Estimating Effects and Evaluation of Alternatives. This section should identify the important environmental and economic points to be addressed and the analytic procedures or methods to be used in evaluating the alternatives and estimating their consequences. For example, will the threshold-of-concern (TOC) approach or some other analytic method be used in comparative analysis. IF TOC is to be used, the method for establishing the TOC for each element of concern should be described. Similar detail should be provided for other selected analysis methods.

7. Timetable for Getting the Job Done. This section of the study plan establishes completion and/or approval dates for the environmental analysis actions along with a definition of the roles of the various participants.

This section displays the critical dates for completion of the various phases of the study including presentations to the management team, public, and other agency involvement, and EA reviews and approval.

The Stikine Area will follow the role assignments set forth in Chapter 11, Exhibit 2, except that the responsible line officer may reserve the management option to approve the alternatives to be developed and subsequently presented in the environmental assessment.

8. Maps. The study plan should include maps and other graphics as needed to enhance understanding and readability.

9. Appendix. The appendix should include appropriate information supporting the study plan, such as the line direction letter to the IDT, the data needs assessment report, and amendments reflecting any changes to the Study Plan as they occur.

11.5 - Environmental Assessment Process

After the study plan is approved, the next step is for the IDT to gather the appropriate additional information and carry out the assessment accordingly. (See Sec. 12.)

If at any time during the assessment process, the ICO's or evaluation criteria are changed from what was agreed to in the study plan, these changes must be documented by memo from the responsible official to the IDT leader. This memo should then be attached to the study plan as an amendment in the appendix, and copies of the memo distributed to recipients of the original study plan.

If the IDT becomes deadlocked on an issue or otherwise encounters a barrier to their efficient progress which requires a line decision, the team leader must request a meeting with the line officer for resolution of the problem. The resolution must be documented, and if it results in any change to the study plan, the plan should be amended and copies provided to those on the study plan distribution list.

After the alternatives have been developed, the IDT leader will meet with the Forest Management Team to finalize the array of alternatives to be evaluated. After the IDT completes the evaluation, the core team (and others as appropriate) will present their findings to the Forest Management Team, and make recommendations so that the responsible official may identify the preferred alternative. There may be other points in the process where line review of IDT progress is required. These should be identified in the study plan timetable.

11.6 - Environmental Assessment Review

(See Chapter 20 for EA format and content). Following identification of the Forest Service Preferred Alternative, the EA will be submitted to the responsible official for review. It will be accompanied by the draft Decision Notice and FONSI, and an ACMP Consistency Determination prepared by the IDT (see Sec. 22.7). The following procedure will be followed for Forest Supervisor or Regional Forester authority:

1. Project proponent (District Ranger or Staff Officer) will send a copy of the EA package to the SO NEPA Coordinator. The EA should represent a best effort by the proponent and should include an abstract. Accompanying maps or other graphics should be of a size and nature that can be easily reproduced.
2. The NEPA Coordinator will distribute a copy to each Staff Officer with a cover memo requesting review and indicating the review period closing date.
3. Staff review. Substantive comments, proposed additions or changes should be made on the review copies and then returned to the NEPA Coordinator.
4. At the close of the review period, the NEPA Coordinator will prepare a summary by consolidating comments and discussing them with individual Staff Officers as necessary.
5. After SO review, the NEPA Coordinator and proponent will review the summary and determine the next course of action, which may be:
 - a. Recommend responsible official approve the EA.
 - b. Revise EA and send directly to responsible official for approval, or
 - c. Proponent prepare major revision and recycle through the review procedure.

If the appropriate course of action is "b" or "c", this will be documented in a letter from the Forest Supervisor to the proponent. A minimum of 10 days should be allowed for SO review to this point.

6. If the responsible official is the Regional Forester, the EA package must be reviewed by the RO. The NEPA Coordinator will send 10 copies of the package to the Regional Forester. This review takes a minimum of 3 weeks.

After RO review, the NEPA Coordinator and proponent will analyze the comments and determine the next course of action, as in "5" above.

7. When the EA package has been approved, the responsible official will sign the EA cover but not the Decision Notice. The NEPA Coordinator will then forward the EA package to the State Division of Governmental Coordination for other agency review and Alaska Coastal Management Program consistency determination. (See coop agreement #81006.) This review takes approximately 35 days.

During the consistency review phase, the signed EA is considered a finished, accepted document. However, the unsigned Decision Notice, FONSI, and ACMP Consistency Determination are still working papers subject to revision. Therefore, distribution of the total EA package should be limited to those agencies and offices responsible for consistency determination.

The signed EA may be released to other publics as an information document at this time, if specifically requested. An attached cover letter should explain that the EA is provided for information at the recipient's request, and that following final action by the responsible official, a copy of the decision notice will also be provided.

The EA is not a working draft or public review document, and comment is not solicited. However, if comments are received from the general public, they should be analyzed and a direct response prepared.

Normal distribution procedure will be to provide copies of the entire EA package to those who have participated in the planning process following consistency review and final action by the responsible official.

8. After consistency review, the NEPA Coordinator and proponent will analyze the comments and recommend to the Forest Management Team the next course of action, which may be:

- a. Recommend responsible official approval of the Decision Notice and FONSI,
- b. Revise the Decision Notice and send directly to the responsible official for approval, or
- c. Proponent prepare major revision of the EA and recycle through the review procedure.

Response to the review comments should be documented in the EA or project planning file as appropriate.

Although EA's for actions for which Rangers have line authority need not be cycled through the SO review process, Rangers can request SO review on any EA, especially if the proposed action involves significant public issues or management concerns. In any event, the Ranger will make the ACMP consistency determination, send the EA package to the State Division of Governmental Coordination, and distribute the EA and Decision Notice to the public after the Decision Notice/FONSI is signed.



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11.4 - Categorical Exclusion. A responsible official has the authority to categorically exclude any action from NEPA procedures and preparation of a NEPA document (FSM 1951.2). Many actions are so clearly without potential to impact the environment that an Environmental Assessment need not be written. Other actions need some environmental analysis before the justification of a categorical exclusion becomes clear. Following this analysis, a notice of decision to categorically exclude an action should be prepared, circulated and documented for the 1950 file. However, in cases where the environmental analysis included public scoping, respondents to the scoping should be notified of the decision to categorically exclude the action. This notice should clearly and concisely state the rationale for the categorical exclusion.

During analysis a determination should be made as to whether or not the project will have a "direct effect on the coastal zone." If a direct effect is identified, a determination of consistency with the Alaska Coastal Management Program should be made. This requirement is independent of the NEPA process.

11.5 - Environmental Assessment Review. An Environmental Assessment is prepared as a means of communication between a responsible official and concerned publics. The assessment will be concise and cover all of the relevant ICO's. It will also address the impact on the coastal zone and discuss the need for an ACMP consistency determination (See Memorandum of Understanding on State Consistency dated 7/25/81), wetlands/floodplain impact (as per Executive Order 11988, and 11990), subsistence (FSM 1921.51 I.D. 7 dated 7/83), and any oversized unit(s) if they occur on the project (FSM 2431.22a SA 28; Alaska Regional Guide page 3-20).

On District Ranger authority projects, the Ranger will be responsible for accomplishing all aspects of the coordination with other agencies thru to the issuance of the Decision Notice. The Supervisor's staff is available for assistance as needed.

On Forest Supervisor and higher authority projects, the following procedure will be followed:

- 1) The District Ranger will submit the EA with the preferred alternative indicated to the Forest Supervisor. The format of the cover page of the Assessment will be similar to that shown in Exhibit 1. The cover letter will indicate the timelines the Ranger is working under for the completion of the reviews required for the project.

- 2) The Environmental Assessment will be routed to the primary staff officer responsible for the project function, and he/she will route to the appropriate staff for review.

- 3) The primary staff officer will then analyze staff comments, summarize them, and send them back to the Ranger thru the Forest Supervisor. If no changes are required, then this will be communicated to the Ranger.

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4) After the Environmental Assessment is considered complete, the Ranger, Forest Supervisor, and primary staff officer will determine if the project will have a direct affect on the coastal zone and if a consistency determination will be required.

a) If a consistency determination is required, the Ranger will prepare a cover letter for Forest Supervisor signature to forward the Environmental Assessment to the state Division of Governmental Coordination (DGC) (See Exhibit 2). The letter will be sent by Certified Mail with a Return Receipt Requested. (See FSH 1909.15 Chapter 20: 22.7--2)

b) If a consistency determination is not required, the District Ranger will prepare a cover letter for Forest Supervisor signature notifying the DGC of a negative determination as required in 15 CFR 930.35(d). [See Exhibit 3].

5) Approval authorities for oversized units are defined on pages 3-18 to 3-21 of the Alaska Regional Guide. If units can be approved by the Forest Supervisor, the Public Notice and Approval can be accomplished through the issuance of the Decision Notice for the project. If units in the preferred alternative require the approval of the Regional Forester, but the project is still within the Forest Supervisor's authority, the following procedure will be followed:

a) A public notice of a 60-day review period will be made. The Public Notice is prepared by the District and advertised in the appropriate places (Exhibit 4).

b) Comments received from the review are forwarded to the Regional Forester for his review along with an unsigned Decision Notice on the oversized unit(s). (See Exhibit 5)

c) After the Regional Forester decision on the unit(s) is made, the Forest Supervisor can then select the alternative to implement for the proposed project and publishes the Decision Notice. (Exhibit 6)

IMPORTANT NOTE: The 60 day public review period on oversized units requiring Regional Forester approval can be concurrent with the state review of the Environmental Assessment.

6) If the responsible official for the project is the Regional Forester, the Environmental Assessment must be reviewed by the Regional Forester. If a state consistency review is required, then that will be conducted as per step 4 by the Forest Supervisor. The results of the state review will be forwarded to the Regional Forester along with the Environmental Assessment. If oversized units requiring Regional Forester approval are involved, the process will conform to 5(a) and (b) above. The primary staff officer will send a complete copy of the package along with an unsigned Decision Notice to the Regional Forester. This review by the Regional Forester takes a minimum of three weeks.

7) After the Decision Notice is signed by the responsible official, the Environmental Assessment, ACMP consistency determination, and Assessment & Finding concerning effects on Subsistence can be made available to those who have requested them.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

BASIN/TWIN AREA

Wrangell Island

Responsible Official

Forest Supervisor, Stikine Area, Tongass National Forest

P.O. Box 309 Petersburg, Alaska

Prepared By:	<u>Richard M. Strauss</u>	<u>4/5/85</u>
	IDT Leader	Date
Recommended By:	<u>Richard K. Kohrt</u>	<u>4-8-85</u>
	District Ranger	Date

For Further Information:

Richard K. Kohrt
District Ranger
Wrangell Ranger District
P.O. Box 51
Wrangell, Alaska 99929

Abstract: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, proposes a timber harvest operation on Wrangell Island. Four action alternatives and a no action alternative were considered. The preferred alternative B, would if implemented, harvest 7.2 MMBF of timber from four clearcut units on 367 total acres. Four and three quarters miles of road would be constructed. The volume would be offered in one sale offering. Following a 30-day compliance review by State and other Federal agencies, the final decision will be made and publically documented in the Decision Notice.

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Region 10

Tongass National Forest
Stikine Area
P.O. Box 309
Petersburg, AK 99833

Reply To: 1950 Forest Service NEPA Process
2430 Commercial Timber Sales

Date: xx

Subject: Bushy Timber Sale

To: Sharon Raymond
Division of Governmental Coordination
Pouch AW
Juneau, Ak 99811

In accordance with established procedure, I am enclosing for your review and comment a copy of the environmental assessment and Alaska Coastal Zone Management Program consistency determination for the proposed Bushy Timber Sale on Bushy Island.

Also enclosed is an Assessment and Finding concerning effects on subsistence.

Should you have any questions regarding this proposed project, please call Keene Kohrt at 874-2323 in Wrangell. I will appreciate your early review and comment.

ROBERT E. LYNN
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Region 10

Tongass National Forest
Stikine Area
P.O. Box 309
Petersburg, AK 99833

Reply To: 1950 Forest Service NEPA Process
2430 Commercial Timber Sales

Date: April 29, 1985

Subject: Basin/Twin Timber Sale

To: Sharon Raymond
Division of Governmental Coordination
Pouch A11
Juneau, AK 99811

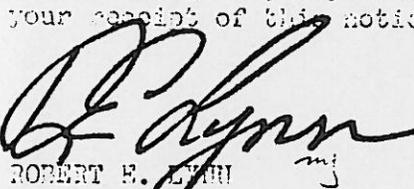
CERTIFIED MAIL #P 192 965 295
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

The Wrangell Ranger District has recently completed an environmental analysis on a 2,000-acre area in central Wrangell Island which will result in the preparation of the Basin/Twin timber sale to harvest approximately 7.2 mbf.

The analysis indicates that the proposed sale will be well away from the beach and will have no significant direct or indirect effect on water quality or anadromous fish habitat.

As a result of this analysis I have determined that the contemplated sale will not directly affect the Coastal Zone. Therefore, no further determination of consistency with ACMP is needed.

A copy of the Environmental Assessment is enclosed for your information. Under 15 CFR 930.35(d), implementation will take place no sooner than 90 days from your receipt of this notice.


ROBERT E. LYNN
Forest Supervisor

040255 0846 PL 1950 DE

LL:WRD

Public Notice
Basin/Twin Area
Environmental Assessment
and

Proposed Harvest Unit Exceeding Regional Guidelines on Size Limitations

The USDA Forest Service, Wrangell Ranger District proposes a timber sale in the Basin/Twin Area on Wrangell Island. Under the Forest Supervisor's preferred alternative, the Basin Timber Sale would harvest approximately 7.2 million board feet of timber from 4 clearcut units, while protecting fish and wildlife habitat values and the visual quality of the area.

Federal regulations implementing the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976 limit the size of individual created openings in the hemlock-Sitka spruce forest type to 100 acres. However, NFMA regulations as well as Alaska Regional Guide direction provide that harvest units larger than 100 acres may be permitted where larger units will produce a more desirable combination of benefits (36 CFR 219.27[d][2][i] and Alaska Regional Guide page 3-20). One harvest unit in the proposed Basin Timber Sale would be approximately 200 acres.

The primary reasons for designing the oversized unit in the proposed Basin Timber Sale are to improve the overall economics of this sale, harvest a stand of dead and dying cedar trees, and to create the possibility of future extension of the specified road system to access timber which would otherwise be inaccessible.

The oversized unit requires 60 days public review prior to approval by the Regional Forester. The Forest Service will accept comments on the proposed timber sale and 200 acre cutting unit until June .

The Environmental Assessment and supporting documents for the proposed timber sale will be available for review at the Wrangell District Ranger's Office. Comments may be submitted to Keene Kohrt, District Ranger, Wrangell Ranger District, P.O. Box 51, Wrangell, AK 99929.

Decision Notice
and
Finding of No Significant Impact
Proposed Oversized Unit in the Basin/Twin Area
Wrangell Island
Stikine Area, Tongass National Forest
Alaska

An Environmental Analysis and Assessment has been completed for the proposed timber harvest and the specified road construction activities within the Basin/Twin Area on Wrangell Island, and is available for public review in Forest Service offices in Wrangell and Petersburg, Alaska.

The study was conducted in accord with the Southeast Area Guide and Management Direction and emphasis of the Tongass Land Management Plan. The affected environment does not include floodplains; however, some muskegs within the Study Area meet the definition of wetlands.

The proposed Basin/Twin Area is located on Wrangell Island at approximately 56°18'N Latitude and 132°13'W Longitude, U.S. Geological Survey quadrangles: Petersburg B-1. The study area is in the northern portion of Management Area S-25 and contains portions of Value Comparison Units (VCU) 478 and 479 identified in the Tongass Land Management Plan.

National Forest Management Act (NFMA) regulations provide that 100 acres is the maximum size of created openings to be allowed for hemlock-Sitka spruce forest type of coastal Alaska, unless excepted under specific conditions. Factors to be considered to determine when a larger size may be permitted are listed in the Forest Service Alaska Regional Guide.

The preferred alternative would create an opening of approximately 200 acres.

Alaska Regional Guidelines provide for the harvest of areas exceeding 100 acres in size when necessary to accomplish management goals. Harvest of this proposed 200-acre unit is necessary to lower costs, provide a superior transportation and harvesting system, and salvage degenerating cedar volume. Factors 8, 9, and 10 of the Alaska Regional Guidelines for maximum size of created openings apply.

The harvesting of this 200-acre unit will not cause any significant adverse effects on the soils, wildlife, fishery, visual, cultural or subsistence resources.

It is my decision to proceed with the oversized unit within the Basin/Twin Area, and I have determined that this is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the human environment, therefore, no Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared. This decision is subject to administrative Review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR 211.18..

Date

Michael A. Barton
Regional Forester

Decision Notice
and
Finding of No Significant Impact

Basin/Twin Area
Wrangell Island
Stikine Area, Tongass National Forest
Alaska

An Environmental Assessment describing proposed timber harvest activities and construction of a specified road system is available for public review in Forest Service offices in Wrangell and Petersburg, Alaska.

The study was conducted in accord with the Southeast Area Guide and Management Direction and emphasis of the Tongass Land Management Plan. The affected environment does not include floodplains; however, some muskegs within the Study Area meet the definition of wetlands.

The proposed harvest activity will occur in the Basin/Twin Area, located on Wrangell Island at approximately 56°18'N Latitude and 132°13'W Longitude, U.S. Geological Survey quadrangle: Petersburg B-1. The study area is in the northern portion of Management Area S-25 and contains portions of Value Comparison Units (VCU) 478 and 479 identified in the Tongass Land Management Plan.

The alternatives considered included a No Action alternative and four alternatives which harvest from 7.2 million board feet (MMBF) to 14.5 MMBF of sawlog volume. These alternatives would construct from 4.75 miles to 9.5 miles of new specified road. All harvested volume would be hauled to the Terminal Transportation Facility at Pat Creek and/or the 6-Mile Mill in Wrangell.

It is my decision to proceed with alternative B. This alternative harvests 7.2 MMBF of sawtimber from 367 acres and constructs 4.75 miles of specified roads. This alternative harvests silvicultural high priority stands, and provides more road access for future land management.

This alternative will create an opening of approximately 200 acres in size in order to lower costs, provide a superior transportation and harvesting system and salvage degenerating cedar volume.

The rationale for selecting the preferred alternative is based on its ability to provide 7.2 MMBF of sawlog volume to help meet District timber targets, while harvesting the dead and dying cedar in the area.

There will be no significant effect on the coastal zone nor any significant restriction on subsistence uses. There will be no significant effect on flood plains or wetlands nor are there any threatened or endangered species within the Study Area.

Based on the above and the discussion of effects in the Environmental Assessment, I have determined that this is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the human environment. It also complies with the National Forest Management Act and the Tongass Land Management Plan.

Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR 211.18. This sale is scheduled to be offered for sale in FY85.

Date

ROBERT E. LYNN
Forest Supervisor
Box 309
Petersburg, Alaska 99833

11.6--ANALYSIS FILE ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT

The purpose of the project ANALYSIS FILE is to contain in one place, in an orderly fashion, all the pertinent documents and records used in the analysis. It will also contain the written record of important actions/decisions taken by those involved in the analysis. The following are those items which should be kept in the ANALYSIS FILE:

- Previous analysis of the area if available (ie. timber sale Position Statement, previous EA's and Decision Notices for activities within the study area).
- TLMP Management Area Direction in effect at the time the analysis is done
- Initial Line direction to the analysis team
- Study plan (when one is prepared) and all amendments to it
- All scoping/public involvement documents/notes/input
- All correspondence with other agencies
- Records of IDT meetings identifying significant actions taken/subjects considered
- Records of all interim decisions made by Line throughout the analysis
- Specialists reports/other information pertinent to the analysis including references to documents not physically in the ANALYSIS FILE (ie TLMP)
- Reference to location of oversize maps, overlays etc. not physically in the file folder.
- Record of all alternatives considered and the reasons why other proposed alternatives were dropped.
- Record of the affects analysis for all alternatives considered including calculations, methodology, and professional conclusions.
- Record of the analysis & finding of (no) significant effect on subsistence.
- Record of analysis of affects on those elements which may impact the coastal zone sufficient to determine if there will be a direct affect on the CZ.
- Record of the economic analysis performed
- Record of the decision that the project is categorically excluded from NEPA review (when appropriate) and brief reason why.
- Record of the decision process (ie TEP)
- Final EA/EIS , DECISION NOTICE, FONSI.

NEPA PROCEDURES HANDBOOK

The intent is to have a complete file of the important information pertaining to the analysis so that the process can be reconstructed and important decisions substantiated. It will also serve as a solid reference for future activity on the project such as layout and appraisal. The ANALYSIS FILE will normally contain the original copy of all correspondence and, for District projects, will be kept on the district and furnished to the SO as needed. Page-sized documents will normally be housed in an accordian file with sections labeled to hold the documents more or less in order of the way the analysis progresses--i.e. POSITION STATEMENT, STUDY PLAN, SCOPING, MEETING NOTES, etc.

All documents, regardless of subject matter, should have a common primary file designation (the specific designations should be prescribed at the beginning of the analysis). Project analysis (i.e. timber sales, fish passes, TTF's etc.) should generally have functional primary designations. Multi-functional studies (i.e. MAA) should normally have a Planning (1920) primary designation. Dual designations are acceptable but the original copy will be filed in the Analysis File.

If more than one accordian file is needed, each should be clearly marked to cross reference to the others. Project maps used in the analysis should also be clearly marked to designate them as part of the analysis file, and if stored separately, should also be clearly cross referenced to the accordian file.

EXAMPLE:

ROSE BUD TIMBER SALE--ANALYSIS FILE 1of3
 ROSE BUD TIMBER SALE--ANALYSIS FILE 2of3(MAPS)*
 ROSE BUD TIMBER SALE--ANALYSIS FILE 3of3

* Map tube file

In order to facilitate maintenance and use of the file a log sheet should be kept in the front section of file folder #1 and should be maintained by a single designated individual. The log should contain the following:

- Document number (assigned in order filed)
- Date filed (date available to the analysis team)
- Document name or description
- Secondary file designation
- Location in the File by File Folder and Section
- Space for Sign-out & Return notations when material is taken from the file

EXAMPLE: (ROSE BUD TIMBER SALE---primary file designation 2430)

DOC.#	DATE FILED	DOC. NAME/DESCRIPTION	FILE DESIG.	LOCATION (FILE/SEC.)	SIGN OUT/ RETURN
1	1/23/84	Position statement	2410	File 1, sec.2	
2	3/15/84	Ranger letter to IDT	2430	" sec 3	
3	4/20/84	Study Plan	"	" sec 4	
4	4/20/84	Scoping comments	"	" sec 4	
5	"	"	"	" "	
6	"	"	"	" "	
7	4/25/84	Study Pln Amendment	"	" "	
8	5/1/84	Recreation Report	2300	" sec 5	
9	5/2/84	Scoping comments	2430	" sec 4	
10	5/5/84	Fisheries Report	2630	" sec 5	JS-8/8/85
11	5/8/84	Meeting Notes	2430	" sec 3	
12	5/15/84	Wildlife Report	2630	" sec 5	
13	5/15/84	Wildlife Overlay	"	File 2,(tube 1)	
ETC.					

Documents from the file may be needed for public display (during appeals, court cases etc.) This doesn't mean that everything has to be typed in finished form--meeting notes and the like can be hand written. However, everything should be legible, there should not be any inappropriate marginal comments, and everything must be paginated, dated & unless otherwise inappropriate, initialed or signed by the author!

Organization and maintenance of the file will normally be the responsibility of the IDT leader unless otherwise provided for in the Study Plan.

After close-out of the project/study, the responsible official will identify how long the file(s) should be retained (See FSH 6209.11). This should be clearly marked on the File (i.e.-"hold until 1990 and throw only after review by Rec & Lands").

CONFIDENTIAL - SECURITY INFORMATION (S)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (100-442891)

FROM: SAC, NEW YORK (100-12345)

RE: [Illegible]

[Illegible]

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