



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service

Tongass National Forest  
R10-MB-739b

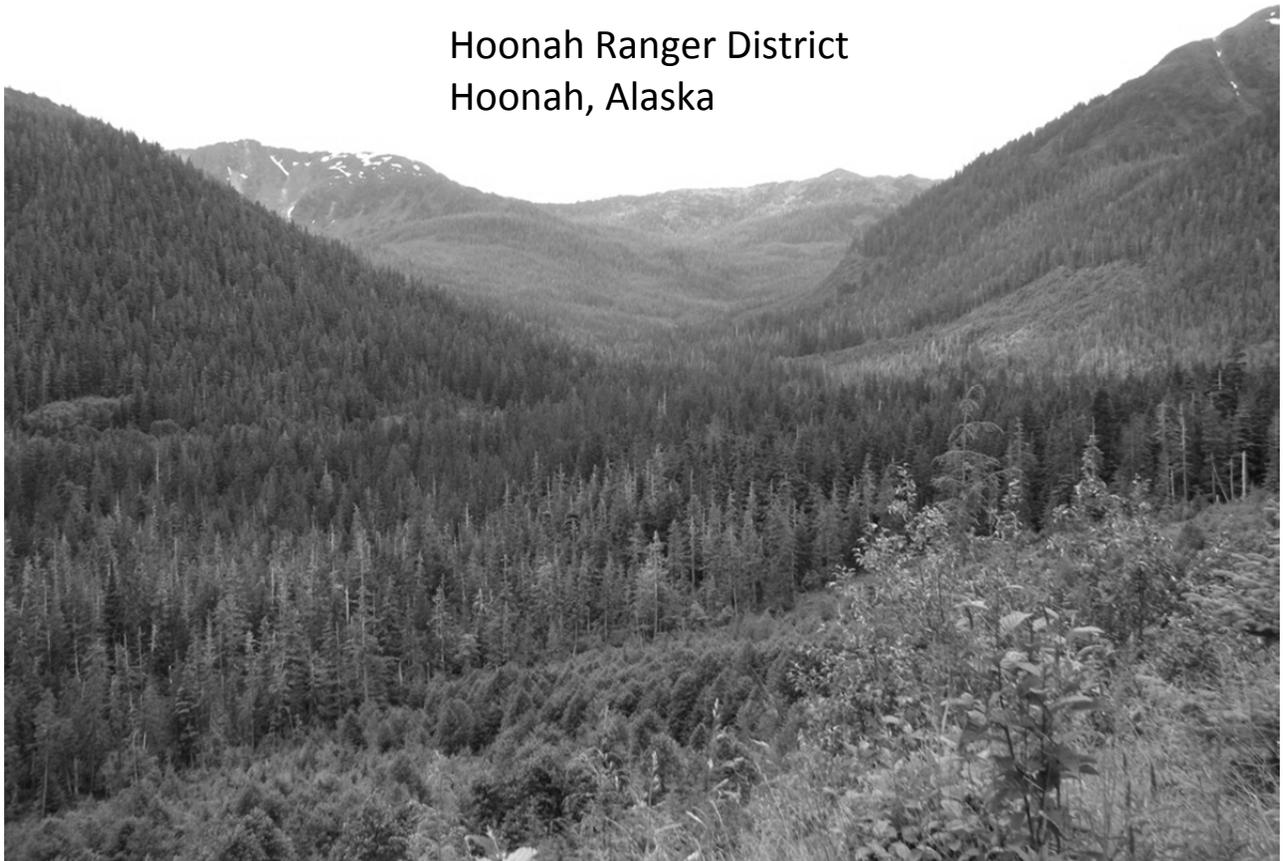
April 2012



# Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I

## Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact

Hoonah Ranger District  
Hoonah, Alaska



# Acronyms

ANCSA	Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act	IRMP	Integrated resource management plan
ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act	LUD	Land use designation
APE	Area of potential effect	MAF	Marine access facility
ATM	Access travel management	MBF	Thousand board feet
ATV	All-terrain vehicle	MIS	Management indicator species
BMP	Best management practice	ML	Maintenance level (of roads)
CE	Categorical exclusion	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	NFS	National Forest system
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act	NRIS	National resource information system
DN	Decision notice	OHV	Off highway vehicle
EA	Environmental assessment	OPML	Operational management level
EFH	Essential fish habitat	RCS	Road condition surveys
ESA	Endangered Species Act	RMA	Riparian management area
FONSI	Finding of no significant impact	SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
FSH	Forest Service handbook	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
GIS	Geographic information system		
HUC	Hydrologic unit code		
IDT	Interdisciplinary team		

Cover photo: View from NFS road 85911 looking west/southwest to headwaters of the Kennel Creek drainage. Photograph by Jon Hyde.



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Alaska Region  
Tongass National Forest  
Hoonah Ranger District

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File Code: 1950

Date: April 27, 2012

Dear Planning Participant,

Here is your copy of the Decision Notice and Finding of No Significance (DN/FONSI) for the Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I on the Hoonah Ranger District, Tongass National Forest. The DN/FONSI documents my final decision on the Selected Alternative, and the rationale in reaching the decision. The effective date of implementation of the decision and the Notice of Rights to Appeal are also specified in this document.

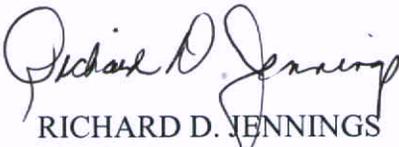
Copies of the DN and FONSI have been mailed to individuals, businesses, organizations, agencies, and tribes and corporations that have previously shown interest in USDA Forest Service projects within the vicinity of Hoonah, Alaska. Copies of this DN and FONSI are also available for review at Forest Service offices throughout the Tongass and online at:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/nepa\\_project.shtml?project=36217](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/nepa_project.shtml?project=36217).

For additional information, please contact the Hoonah Ranger District at (907) 945-3631 during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

As the District Ranger, I am responsible for this decision. I want to thank those who took the time to review and comment on the EA. Your interest in the management of the Tongass National Forest is appreciated.

Sincerely,

  
RICHARD D. JENNINGS  
District Ranger





General location of future instream large wood placement to improve stream habitat complexity in Kennel Creek. Photograph by Jon Hyde.

# Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I

## Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact

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Agency: USDA Forest Service  
Tongass National Forest

Responsible Official: Richard D. Jennings, District Ranger  
Hoonah Ranger District  
PO Box 135  
Hoonah, AK 99829

For further information: Tim Hazelwood  
Hoonah Ranger District  
PO Box 135  
Hoonah, AK 99829  
(907) 945-3631

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### Abstract

The Responsible Official has selected the action alternative (Alternative 2) from the Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I Environmental Assessment which will make 500 thousand board feet (MBF) of selection old-growth available for harvest and allow for 350 acres of precommercial and commercial upland thinning in managed timber stands. The alternative also allows for 100 acres of slash reduction in previously thinned units; 19 acres of riparian thinning in a previously harvested riparian management area (RMA); placement of large wood in the floodplain of the main channel of Kennel Creek; and replacement of five red culverts and one gray culvert. The treatments specifically target the effects of past timber harvest and road management that have altered riparian and upland function and are designed to help reach the desired condition, as prescribed by the Forest Plan.

This document is available online at:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/nepa\\_project.shtml?project=36217](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/nepa_project.shtml?project=36217).



Kennel Creek. Photograph by Jon Hyde.

# DECISION NOTICE and FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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Kennel Creek project area within stand #49. The Selected Alternative plans to selectively remove trees in this general area to enhance wildlife habitat. Photograph by Jon Hyde.

# **Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I**

## **Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact**

### **USDA Forest Service Hoonah Ranger District, Tongass National Forest Hoonah, Alaska**

This decision notice documents my decision for the Hoonah Ranger District Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I. It contains a brief summary of the environmental analysis completed for this project as well as my decision regarding which alternative to implement and the rationale for my decision. It also contains certain findings required by various laws, and information concerning the right to Administrative Review of this decision. The environmental assessment (EA) completed for this project in January 2012 documents the environmental analysis and conclusions upon which this decision is based. The EA is incorporated by reference in this decision document.

## **Decision and Rationale**

Based on my review of the Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I EA, I have decided to implement Alternative 2, the proposed action, hereafter known as the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative best meets the Purpose and Need identified in the EA and Forest Plan objectives and guidelines. Implementing the Selected Alternative will:

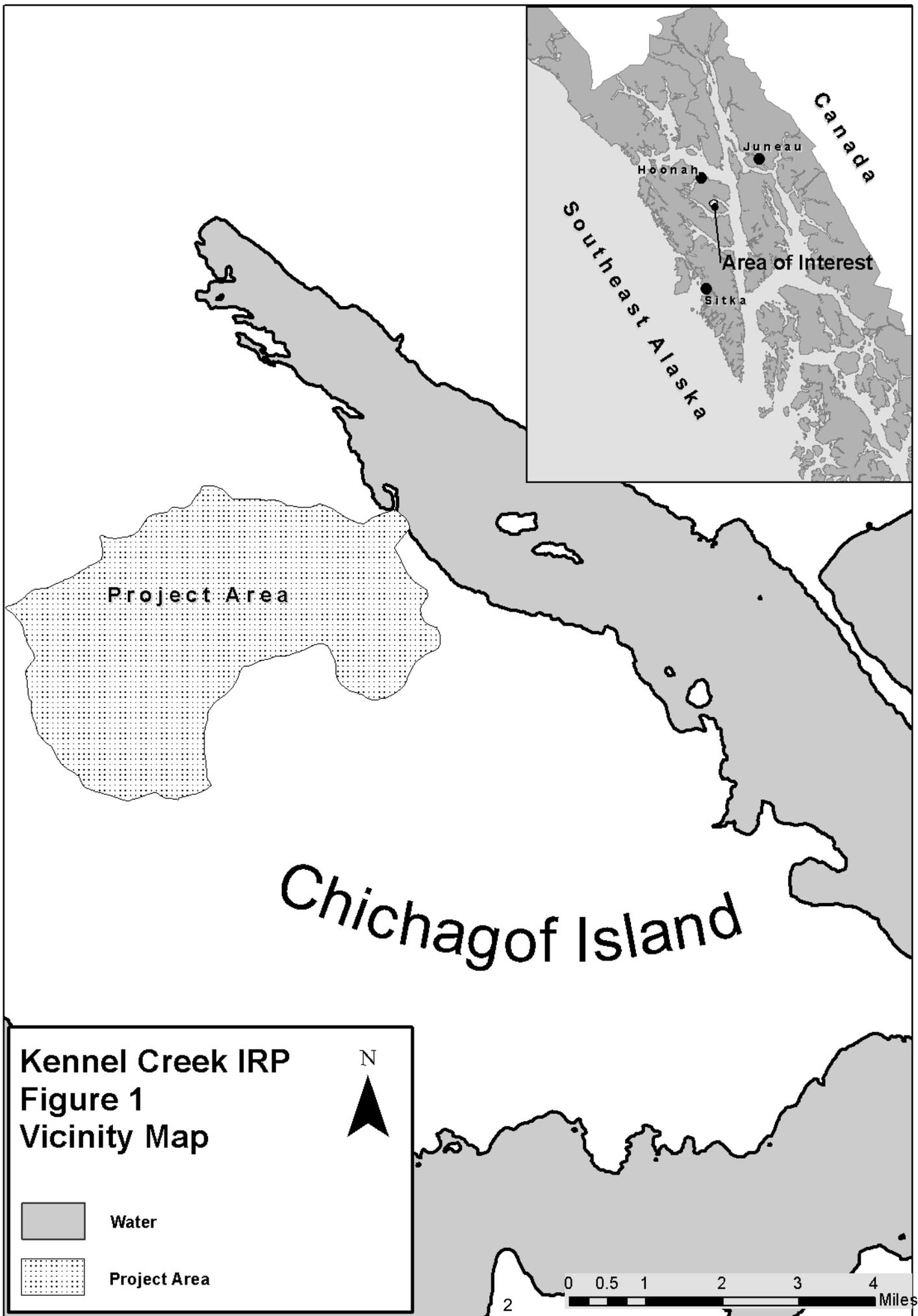
- Provide timber for local operators and enhance wildlife and old-growth conditions in upland areas.
- Specifically target the effects of past timber harvest and road management that have altered riparian and upland function to help reach the desired condition, as prescribed by the Forest Plan.

The Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I EA documents the environmental analysis and conclusions upon which this decision is based.

## **Project Location**

The project area is the Kennel Creek watershed which is located approximately 18 miles south-southeast of the town of Hoonah, Alaska, on the eastern shore of Chichagof Island (Figure 1). Kennel Creek drains directly into saltwater on the west shore of Freshwater Bay. The watershed encompasses approximately 8,520 acres (13.3 square miles) and contains 43.4 miles of mapped stream channels.

The entire Kennel Creek watershed is in federal ownership and managed by the Forest Service.



## The Selected Alternative

The Selected Alternative includes harvesting suitable forest lands for the production of sawtimber and other wood products with selection harvest of old-growth stands and improving the short and long-term health of the aquatic and upland ecosystems by implementing a wide range of watershed restoration and enhancement activities. This alternative also addresses the cumulative effects of past management by removing human-created fish passage barriers, reducing road related erosion, restoring instream processes that provide fish habitat, reducing stream-bank erosion and stream diversion potential, improving wildlife movement through managed stands, and enhancing tree growth and yield in designated timber production areas.

This alternative offers an integrated, landscape-level approach to resource management and facilitates a comprehensive analysis of the proposed actions. This approach also provides for more cost-efficient analysis and implementation for contracting or potential stewardship projects.

Projects in the Selected Alternative (Figure 2) are grouped into three categories:

### Aquatic Restoration

- Five stream crossing structures currently do not allow fish passage (red culverts) and one structure is a possible fish barrier (gray culvert). The Selected Alternative is expected to improve fish passage by removing two red culverts, and replacing three red and a gray culvert with passable structures. The culverts included for removal are on NFS roads 85191 and 851911.
- Riparian thinning on 19 acres to improve floodplain function by increasing bank stability through understory development and to increase the growth rate of young conifers for future large woody debris. Treatments are low intensity and small in scale.
- Approximately 300 meters of Kennel Creek have lost its natural influx of large wood as a result of past timber harvest. The Selected Alternative includes an instream project, approximately 300 meters upstream from the Kennel Creek Trail, to improve habitat complexity and spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous fish along this stretch. The alternative includes placing two to four whole trees with root wads attached within the active stream channel to act as an anchor. Five to ten logs, from dismantled log stringer bridges, will be placed onto the upstream side of each whole tree, creating a log jam. Trees and logs will be placed by an excavator or log shovel tracked machine.

### Wildlife Enhancement

- Reduce slash accumulations on approximately 100 acres of precommercially thinned managed stands by brushing trails, 5 feet wide, through areas of heavy slash buildup (see slash treatments on Figure 2). The slash will be scattered or piled. Treatment will be within the lower portion of four managed stands along NFS roads 8519 (Stands #1000 and #2000), 85191 (Stand #163) and 85193 (Stand #166). All work will be done by hand. Corridors are expected to facilitate wildlife movement and stimulate forage production.
- Create gaps and thickets by thinning 350 acres in three previously harvested upland stands to improve species composition, increase growth rates and move the stands toward old-growth conditions (see wildlife treatments on Figure 2).

- The majority of the area selected for treatment (250 acres) is located on the east side Stand #49 where the area is in the stem exclusion stage. Access to the stand will be via closed road 8510 1.01R.
  - Approximately 200 acres of Stand #49 are selected for thinning, and potentially some girdling, in the eastern portion of the stand. Some of the trees selected for removal as part of the thinning process may have commercial value; consequently, ground-based equipment may salvage some of these trees.
  - Approximately 50 acres of Stand #49, consisting of younger and smaller trees, are selected for thinning and slash removal using hand tools.
- The remaining acres selected for thinning, approximately 100, are located in stands harvested in 1981 and 1991 off of NFS roads 85191 (Stand #5600), 851911 (Stands #162 and #3000) and 85171 (Stand #42).

### **Timber Management**

- Manage 250 acres of suitable forest lands for the production of sawtimber and other wood products by selectively harvesting 500 MBF of old-growth timber from four units (see Figure 2 and Unit Cards). Units 1 and 2 are north of NFS roads 85191 and 851911 above existing young-growth stands. Units 3 and 4 are in the southeast portion of the project area near NFS roads 8517, 8510 and 85171. The harvest prescription is designed to maintain and manage an uneven-aged stand structure through the selection of individual trees of various size classes throughout the stand, while encouraging regeneration and stand growth. No new roads will be constructed but existing closed roads will be re-opened as needed. Shovel yarding will be used for the majority of the harvest units; however, if feasible, helicopter yarding may occur within approximately 80 acres. Cut material removed from the area would be appraised to the sort yard at Long Island.

### **Public and Agency Involvement**

This action was originally listed as a proposal on the Tongass National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions in July 2011 and updated periodically during the analysis. A 30-day scoping letter, soliciting comments on the proposed project, was mailed in June 2011. The scoping letter, which summarized the purpose and need for the project and actions proposed, was sent to approximately 70 individuals, organizations, federal and state agencies, and native tribes and corporations that have previously shown interest in USDA Forest Service projects within the vicinity of Hoonah, Alaska. Two responses to scoping were received (Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Alaska).

A 30-day Notice for Public Comment on the EA was published in the *Juneau Empire*, on February 17, 2012. Approximately 101 individuals, organizations, federal and state agencies and native tribes and corporations were notified by mail with either the delivery of an EA hardcopy or a letter announcing the availability of the EA online. The EA includes the distribution list on pages 43-45. Two responses to the EA were received (Gordon Chew of Tenakee Logging Company and the State of Alaska).

Responses to the EA were generally supportive. Below are responses and clarifications to some of the comments.

1. *Recommendation that this project include a monitoring plan to determine the achievement of the wildlife enhancement goals.* The Hoonah Ranger District wildlife biologist is discussing the potential for effectiveness monitoring in the Kennel Creek drainage with ADF&G biologists.
2. Some inconsistencies between the EA and the unit cards were brought to my attention.  
*The EA states (page 2) that the Proposed Action will, ‘...selectively harvest approximately 500 MBF (250 acres) of old growth from 4 units...’; however, the Unit Cards and summary sheets (pages 55-59) within the EA show harvest level of 1025 MBF on only 150 acres. The correct numbers were reported in the text and have been corrected in the Unit Cards (500 MBF on 250 acres of old-growth from 4 units).*  
*The EA further states (page 9), “...if feasible, helicopter yarding may occur within approximately 80 acres.” Based on the Unit Card Information it appears that approximately 110 acres of the 150 acres shown in the unit cards will be helicopter logged. Again, the information in the text of the EA is correct. The Unit Cards have been updated to clarify the number of acres selected for helicopter yarding in Unit 3. Approximately 20 of the 100 acres in Unit 3 are selected for helicopter yarding. These acres, in addition to the 60 acres in Units 1 and 2, total 80 acres of helicopter yarding for the project area.*
3. *It was recommended that the District complete an economic analysis (FAST-R) for the proposed timber harvest.* The District’s timber staff has had discussions with local timber purchasers regarding helicopter logging feasibility and the likelihood of their bidding on that yarding option. The local timber purchasers have consistently confirmed they would likely bid on the timber in these units in the right market conditions. I feel this is more reliable than the economic model; consequently, FAST-R was not utilized as part of my decision-making process.
4. *Concern about the silviculture prescriptions allegedly compromising timber resources in favor of other resources.* I believe no facet of the vegetation management (old-growth harvest, thinning, or slash treatment) will compromise the timber resource.
5. *According to the EA (page 29), the old-growth harvest prescription is designed to maintain a portion of the original stand structure (up to 60 percent) and harvest trees with the highest economic value. These silvicultural approaches diminish the timber resource value by extracting the currently highest valued trees and producing a wide-grained log, due to the faster growth rates, in an uneven-managed stand that will be more expensive to operate on in the future using conventional harvest techniques.* The EA text, “...to harvest trees with the highest economic value” is misleading and could understandably be interpreted as decreasing the residual value of the timber stand, i.e., high-grading. These stands are at the backline of old harvest units, have no road to them, and are relatively isolated. The likelihood of ever having funds for roads to these units is extremely low. Since the silvicultural prescription objective is uneven-aged management, this is the first of repeated entries into the timber stands. At this first entry, the EA states (page 29), “The remaining old-growth trees would maintain stand structure and

diversity.” To make this an economically viable timber sale, I will be focusing on the cedar; however, the stand will be opened enough to ensure re-propagation of the cedar component. These factors, as well as the local demand for timber and an opportunity for an integrated resource project implementation, were factors in my decision-making process.

## Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

1. **Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.**

Neither adverse nor beneficial effects are significant in context or intensity to warrant an EIS for this project. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.

2. **The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.**

This action does not pose a substantial question of significant effect upon public health or safety. Similar past forest management activities have not resulted in significant effects upon public health or safety. All applicable federal and state laws pertaining to public health and safety will be followed.

3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic areas such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

The project does not enter any roadless areas. No historic properties, park lands or farmlands are located within the area of potential effects for the project. Generally speaking, the majority of the Kennel Creek project falls within the low probability zones for cultural resources. This determination was made on the basis the location and size of the commercial sale areas, the unlikelihood of discovering a site in an active stream channel and the absence of known historic properties (EA pages 20-21). No wild and scenic rivers occur in the project area. No high-value wetlands and high-vulnerability karst occur in the project area. Therefore, I have determined there will be no significant effects on any unique characteristics of the area.

4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

Public comments resulting from project scoping and the EA have been, on the whole, supportive. Therefore, based on those comments and analysis, I have determined that any effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial.

5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

Effects described in the EA have been analyzed with a reasonable degree of certainty. There are no known effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The mitigations, harvest methods, and other features of this decision are either commonly used or present known risks. Based on this analysis, I have determined no unique or unknown risk is involved with this project; therefore, there is no “significant” impact due to uncertainty or a unique or unknown risk.

6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.**

This decision only pertains to work within the Kennel Creek project area. Any future decisions would need to consider relevant scientific and site-specific information available at that time. Therefore, I have determined the Selected Alternative would not set a precedent for future actions with significant impacts, nor would it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

There are no known significant cumulative effects between this project and other projects implemented or planned on the areas separated from the affected area of this project. Cumulative effects have been analyzed and disclosed throughout Chapter 3 of the EA. Therefore, I have determined the Selected Alternative actions have individually insignificant impacts and cumulatively insignificant impacts as they relate to past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions.

8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.**

The Forest Service has determined that a finding of No Historic Properties Affected is appropriate for this project. This project meets the provisions stipulated in the Programmatic Agreement between the Forest Service, Alaska Region, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the State Historic Preservation Officer. Therefore, I have determined no significant impacts would occur that adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.**

There are no listed species or critical habitat in the project area or in areas adjacent to the project area, and no marine environment is included in the project area (EA pages 19 and 37). Therefore, I have determined no significant impacts would occur that adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

The following findings show that the action does not violate federal, state, or local law requirements imposed for the protection of the environment, and has been reviewed by federal and state agencies. The action is consistent with the Forest Plan.

## **Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations**

### **2008 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan**

This decision is consistent with the Forest Plan and the action alternative complies with the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended. This project incorporates all applicable Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and management prescriptions and complies with Forest Plan goals and objectives. The Forest Plan complies with all resource integration and management requirements of 36 CFR 219 (219.14 through 219.27). Application of Forest Plan direction for the Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I ensures compliance at the project level. Therefore, I have found the Selected Alternative consistent with the Forest Plan.

### **Endangered Species Act**

The Selected Alternative is not anticipated to have a direct, indirect or cumulative effect on any threatened and endangered species in or outside the project area (EA pages 19 and 37). Consultations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service have been conducted and these agencies have concurred; the proposed project is not likely to affect any threatened or endangered species. A Biological Evaluation has been completed for this action which indicates that no federally listed threatened or endangered species will be affected by this activity. Therefore, I conclude no significant effects will occur to threatened and endangered species.

### **National Historic Preservation Act**

The Forest Service program for compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) includes locating, inventorying and evaluating the National Register of Historic Places eligibility of historic and archeological sites that may be directly or indirectly affected by scheduled activities. Regulations (36 CFR 800) implementing Section 106 of the NHPA require federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on sites that are determined eligible for inclusion in or are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (termed “historic properties”). A Forest Service archeologist has reviewed this project and we have made a determination of “No Historic Properties Affected,” in the area of potential effects for the proposed project (EA page 21). Therefore, I conclude no significant effects will occur to historic resources.

### **Federal Cave Resource Protection Act**

There are no known caves or rocks associated with karst formation, including limestone and dolomite, within the project area. Forest Plan Karst and Caves Standards and Guidelines will be applied should any karst resources be found. Therefore, I conclude no significant effects will occur to karst or caves.

### **Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)**

The effects of this project have been evaluated to determine potential effects on subsistence opportunities and resources. There is no documented or reported subsistence use that will be restricted as a result of this decision. For this reason, the Selected Alternative is not expected to result in a significant possibility of a significant restriction of subsistence use of wildlife, fish, or other foods (EA page 40). Therefore, I have found the Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I selected alternative consistent with ANILCA.

### **Clean Water Act**

I have determined that this project fully complies with the Clean Water Act. Project activities meet all applicable State of Alaska Water Quality Standards.

This project will be implemented using soil and water best management practices (BMPs) that are consistent with the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Regulations (AFRPA) to achieve Alaska Water Quality Standards and to control nonpoint source pollution. Therefore, I have determined that no significant impact to water quality is expected to occur from this decision.

### **Clean Air Act**

Emissions anticipated from the implementation of the Selected Alternative will be of short duration and are not expected to exceed State of Alaska ambient air quality standards (18 AAC 50). Therefore, I have determined that no significant impact to air quality is expected to occur from this project.

### **Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act**

Section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act requires consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for actions or proposed actions that may adversely affect essential fish habitat, defined as the waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity.

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) includes streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, wetlands and other bodies of water currently and historically accessible to anadromous fish, as well as estuarine, intertidal, and marine waters.

Because all activities proposed are designed to restore or enhance natural processes using Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and Best Management Practices, it is unlikely that any significant adverse effects will occur to Essential Fish Habitat by implementing this project (EA page 18).

### **Executive Order 11988**

Executive Order 11988 directs federal agencies to take action to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of floodplains. I have concluded that no significant impacts to floodplains will occur due to project implementation.

**Executive Order 11990**

This Executive Order requires federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse impacts associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands. Since the estimated effects to wetlands will be temporary (EA page 36), I have concluded that no significant impacts to wetlands will occur due to project implementation.

**Executive Order 12898**

Executive Order 12898 directs federal agencies to identify and address the issue of environmental justice, i.e., adverse human health and environmental effects of agency programs that disproportionately impact minority and low-income populations. I have concluded that implementation of the Selected Alternative is not anticipated to cause disproportionate adverse human health or environmental effects to minority or low income populations.

**Executive Order 12962**

Executive Order 12962 directs federal agencies to conserve, restore, and enhance aquatic systems to provide for increased recreational fishing opportunities nationwide.

It is my determination that with the application of Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines, including those for riparian areas, no significant adverse effects to freshwater or marine resources will occur. Best Management Practices will be implemented to provide assurance of water quality and aquatic habitat protection for all freshwater streams affected by the project. Therefore, any adverse effects to recreational fishing opportunities will be insignificant.

**Executive Order 13007**

Executive Order 13007 directs federal agencies to (1) accommodate access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners and (2) avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of such sacred sites. Where appropriate, agencies shall maintain the confidentiality of sacred sites. Based on consultations with the appropriate Indian tribes, I have determined this project will not affect the integrity of any sacred sites or limit access to any sacred sites. Therefore, based on the EA and the findings displayed previously, there are no violations of federal, state, or local environmental law associated with this action.

**National Forest Management Act**

This project incorporates all applicable Forest Plan standards and guidelines and management area prescriptions as they apply to the project area, and complies with Forest Plan goals and objectives. All required interagency review and coordination has been accomplished; new or revised measures resulting from this review have been incorporated.

The Forest Plan complies with all resource integration and management requirements of 36 CFR 219 (219.14 through 219.27). Application of Forest Plan direction for the Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I ensures compliance at the project level.

## **Tongass Timber Reform Act**

Application of Forest Plan Riparian Standards and Guidelines ensures that no commercial timber harvest is allowed within 100 feet horizontal distance either side of Class I or Class II streams flowing directly into a Class I stream. Therefore, I have determined that no significant effects will occur to riparian areas.

## **Distribution**

The Kennel Creek Integrated Resource Project I Decision Notice, FONSI and EA are available on the internet at [http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/nepa\\_project.shtml?project=36217](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/nepa_project.shtml?project=36217). Notification of the availability of the decision notice was sent to the project mailing list including state and federal agencies, anyone commenting on the project and anyone requesting a copy of this decision. The project mailing list is available in the project record. The DN/FONSI is also available in hardcopy, upon request.

## **Implementation Date**

Implementation of my decision which is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR part 215, may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. The appeal filing period closes 45 days after publication of legal notice of this decision in the *Juneau Empire*, published in Juneau, Alaska.

## **Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities**

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. Individuals or non-federal organizations who submit written comments or otherwise express interest in this particular action during the comment period specified at 215.6 have standing to appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must be in writing, meet the appeal content requirements at 215.14 and be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer:

Forest Supervisor, Forrest Cole  
Tongass Supervisor's Office  
648 Mission St.  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901  
Fax: 907-228-6292  
Email: [appeals-alaska-tongass@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-alaska-tongass@fs.fed.us)

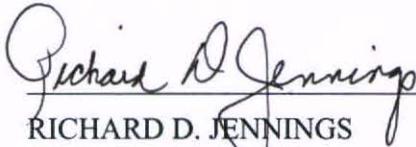
The Notice of Appeal, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, express delivery or messenger service) with the Appeal Deciding Officer at the correct location within 45 calendar days of publication of notice of this decision in the *Juneau Empire*, the newspaper of record for this project. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal.

Appeals submitted electronically, including attachments, must be in an electronic format compatible with Microsoft Word.

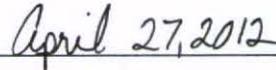
Hand-delivered appeals will be accepted at the Ketchikan Supervisor's Office during normal business hours (8:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m) Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

**Contact**

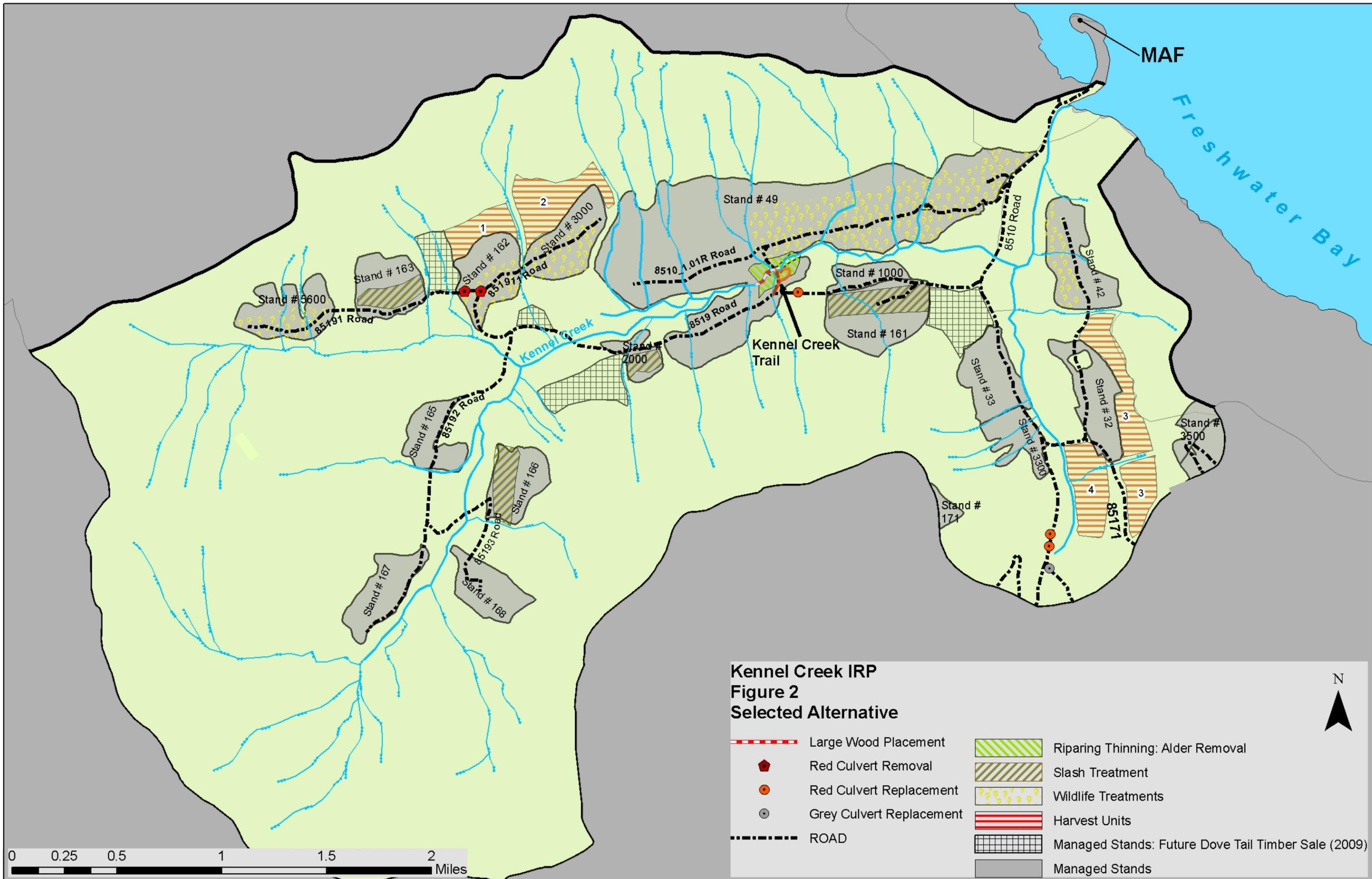
For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Richard D. Jennings, District Ranger, Hoonah Ranger District, PO Box 135, Hoonah, AK 99829, phone number 907-945-3631.



RICHARD D. JENNINGS  
District Ranger  
Hoonah Ranger District



Date



Backside of Figure 2

## Unit Cards

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### Introduction

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Unit cards are used to explain site-specific proposed activities for each unit and any resource concerns and mitigation related to those concerns. Activities include timber harvest units and the building and use of proposed and existing roads for timber harvest. Both narratives and maps showing site-specific information are provided. Minor changes can be expected during implementation to better meet on-site resource management and protection objectives. Slight adjustments to unit boundaries are also likely during final layout for the purpose of improving logging system efficiency or for site conditions.

### Unit Card Header Information

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Each unit card has a header block with information used to generally describe the stand's size, location, and volume proposed for harvest. Each header block contains the following information:

- **Unit Number:** This is the number assigned to the unit block during the Logging Systems and Transportation Analysis development.
- **Alternatives:** This identifies the alternative(s) in which the unit is proposed.
- **Unit Acres:** This is an estimate of total acres within the unit using aerial photos and GIS information.
- **Timber Volume:** This is an estimated volume (sawtimber and utility) in thousand board feet to be harvested. This was derived from field estimates and the stand exam program. A cruise will be done during implementation to determine an accurate volume before the timber is sold.
- **Logging System, Silvicultural Prescription and Retention:** This provides information about harvest treatments, regeneration methods and the level of retention prescribed for each unit.
- **Transportation:** This identifies that portion of the existing or new transportation system needed for access.

### Harvest Treatments

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#### Silvicultural Systems

Silvicultural systems refer to a complete set of treatments used to manage forest stands and forest landscapes over long periods of time. This process includes the harvest or regeneration of the stand, intermediate cutting, and other treatments necessary for the development and replacement of the forest stand.

Silvicultural systems are applied through prescriptions, the written records of the examination, diagnosis, and treatment regimes prescribed for the stand. A diagnosis and draft silvicultural prescription has been prepared for all proposed harvest units. A final

prescription will be completed for units selected for harvest in the Decision Notice. The final silvicultural prescriptions will include detailed sale layout and marking instructions for each unit.

The Forest Plan (Chapter 4 Standards and Guidelines) and USDA Forest Service Manual 2400 (Timber Management) provide detailed information about the silvicultural systems recommended for the Tongass National Forest. The three systems recommended are: (1) even-aged, (2) two-aged, and (3) uneven-aged. The uneven-aged system is proposed for the Kennel Creek Integration Resource Project I. The post-harvest condition of the forest stand for all systems would be dependent upon the existing species composition, the retained canopy structure, and advanced regeneration. Species composition of the regenerated stand would be monitored to ensure that the mix of species is roughly the same as the composition on the existing site.

### **Uneven-aged Management, Single-tree Selection**

Uneven-aged management maintains or creates a stand with trees of three or more distinct age (size) classes, either intimately mixed or in small groups. The resulting stand may have small openings and or individual trees harvested throughout the stand. This remaining structure provides wildlife habitat and reduces visual impacts. The next entry into these stands would be in approximately 75 years, when approximately 33 percent of the stand's pre-harvest basal area would be removed in patches or in single trees.

## **Resource Concerns and Responses**

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In the Kennel Creek project area, most of the economic, wildlife, and watershed concerns are mitigated with the silvicultural system. Other resource concerns, such as soils, scenery, and aquatics, are mitigated by unit design and adherence to Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines (Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines) and Best Management Practices (BMPs).

### **Transportation**

The roads needed to directly access units, or for yarding by helicopter, are identified on the unit cards. No road construction is proposed.

### **Aquatics**

#### **Riparian Management Areas and Stream Buffers**

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines and BMP 12.6 direct the design of Riparian Management Areas (RMAs) associated with each stream in the project area. The Standards and Guidelines prohibit programmed commercial timber harvest in RMAs associated with all Class I, Class II and most Class III streams, except for right-of-way clearing for road construction.

The Forest Plan recognizes four stream classes based on the following criteria:

**Class I:** Streams and lakes with anadromous or adfluvial fish or fish habitat; or high quality resident fish waters, or habitat above fish migration barriers known to be reasonable enhancement opportunities for anadromous fish.

**Class II:** Streams and lakes with resident fish or fish habitat and generally steep (6-25 percent or higher) gradient (can also include streams with a 0-6 percent gradient) where no anadromous fish occur, and otherwise not meeting Class I criteria.

**Class III:** Streams are perennial and intermittent streams that have no fish populations or fish habitat, but have sufficient flow or sediment and debris transport to directly influence downstream water quality or fish habitat capability. For streams less than 30 percent gradient, special care is needed to determine if resident fish are present.

**Class IV:** Other intermittent, ephemeral, and small perennial channels with insufficient flow or sediment transport capabilities to have immediate influence on downstream water quality or fish habitat capability. Class IV streams do not have the characteristics of Class I, II or III streams and have a bankfull width of at least 0.3 meter (1 foot).

RMA's vary in width from the edge of the stream channel according to process group and stream value class. Stream buffers are defined by the extent of the RMA, with additional protections provided for windfirmness and site specific conditions as needed (Table 15).

**Table 15. RMA Buffers for streams in or adjacent to proposed harvest units**

Process Group - Stream Class	RMA Stream Buffer
Alluvial Fan (AF) – Class I, II, III	The greater the distance of the active portion of alluvial fan or one site potential tree height from the active portion of the channel (140 feet)
Floodplain (FP) - Class I & II	The greater the distance of one site potential tree height (130 feet), the 100-year flood plain, riparian vegetation or soils, or the riparian associated wetland fens
High-gradient Contained (HC) – Class I & II	The greater distance of 100 feet or to the top of the V-notch (side-slope break)
High-gradient Contained (HC) – Class III	Within the v-notch to the break in the side-slope
Moderate-gradient Contained (MC) – Class I & II	The greatest distance of the area within 100 feet of the stream or to the top of the side-slope break
Moderate-gradient Contained (MC) – Class III	Area from the stream to the side-slope break
Moderate-gradient, Mixed –control (MM) – Class I & II	The greatest distance of one site potential tree height (120 feet), the 100-year flood plain, riparian vegetation or soils, or riparian soils, or riparian associated wetland fens
Large Contained (LC) – Class I & II	The greatest distance of the area within 100 feet of the stream or to the top of the side-slope break
Large Contained (LC) – Class III	Area from the stream to the side-slope break

Process Group - Stream Class	RMA Stream Buffer
Palustrine (PA) – Class I & II	The greater distance of 100 feet from the streambank, the 100-year flood plain, the extent of riparian vegetation, riparian soils, or riparian associated wetland fens
Lakes & Ponds – Class I & II	The greatest distance of 100 feet from the shoreline, the riparian vegetation, or associated wetland fens

Windthrow risk was evaluated for each unit considering prevailing wind direction, topography, evidence of windthrow within proposed units and along edges of previous harvest units, and the proximity to other wind-generated stands. All units are considered wind firm.

Unit card maps show the location and identification number of all known Class I, II and III streams within each unit. Class IV streams are not described in the unit card tables. All Class IV streams will be surveyed during unit layout and receive protection using the following techniques, depending on local site conditions:

- Directional felling along streams and full suspension of logs yarded across streams, immediate cleanout of logging debris. May include partial retention of standing trees along stream courses.
- Split yarding when practicable, partial log suspension when yarding across channels and stream cleanout once logging is completed.

Log yarding practices are based on slope stability, soil disturbance, process group, and stream class. Additional measures taken to protect RMAs from possible disturbance associated with tree felling and yarding are identified in the unit card tables where appropriate. The objective is to minimize soil erosion, mass movement, and formation of new channels.

**Process Groups and Channel Types**

The Tongass National Forest defines stream channel types according to the Channel Type User Guide (USDA Forest Service 1992), the foundation upon which aquatic habitat management prescriptions are developed. Channel types are defined within the context of fluvial process groups that describe the interrelationship between watershed runoff, landform relief, geology, and glacial or tidal influences on fluvial erosion and deposition processes. Individual channel type classifications are defined by physical attributes such as channel gradient, width, pattern, stream bank incision and containment (Table 16). See the Forest Plan, Figure D-1 (page D-4) for a visual representation of the typical distribution of channel process groups. The unit card maps and tables summarize the protections provided for particular units. Only stream classes I, II and III in proposed timber harvest units are depicted in the maps.

**Table 16. Channel Types in or adjacent to proposed harvest units**

<b>Process Group</b>	<b>Channel Type Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
Alluvial Fan	AF1	Moderate Gradient Alluvial Fan Channel
	AF2	High Gradient Alluvial Cone Channel
Floodplain	FP3	Narrow Low Gradient Floodplain Channel
	FP4	Low Gradient Floodplain Channel
	FP5	Wide Low Gradient Floodplain Channel
High-gradient Contained	HC1	Shallowly Incised Muskeg Channel
	HC2	Shallowly to Moderately Incised Footslope Channel
	HC3	Deeply Incised Upper Valley Channel
	HC5	Shallowly Incised Very High Gradient Channel
	HC6	Deeply Incised Mountain Slope Channel
Moderate-gradient Contained	MC1	Narrow Shallow Contained Channel
	MC2	Moderate Width and Incision Contained Channel
Moderate-gradient, Mixed - control	MM1	Narrow Mixed Control Channel
	MM2	Moderate Width Mixed Control Channel
Large Contained	LC1	Low Gradient Contained Channel
Palustrine	PA2	Moderate Width Placid Flow Channel
	PA5	Beaver Dam / Pond Channel

## **Best Management Practices**

The following best management practices (BMPs) will be applied in order to protect water quality in the project area as specified in the Forest Plan (pages C-1 to C-3). BMPs 12.6, 12.6a, 13.9, 13.14 and 13.16 will be implemented for all streams noted in the unit cards. Not all BMPs apply to every situation; protections are noted for site specific conditions in the unit cards where appropriate.

BMP 12.6 (Riparian Area Designation and Protection) – Identify riparian areas and their associated management activities.

BMP 12.6a (Buffer Design and Layout) – Design streamside buffers to meet objectives defined during the implementation of BMP 12.6.

BMP 13.2 (Timber Harvest Unit Design) – Incorporate site-specific soil and water resource considerations into integrated timber harvest unit design criteria.

BMP 13.5 (Identification and Avoidance of Unstable Areas) – Avoid triggering mass movements and resultant erosion and sedimentation by excluding unstable areas from timber harvest.

BMP 13.9 (Determining Guidelines for Yarding Operations) – Select appropriate yarding systems and guidelines for protecting soil and water resources.

BMP 13.14 (Completion of Erosion Control for Unit Acceptance and Sale Closure) – Assure that the required erosion control work is completed before unit acceptance.

BMP 13.16 (Stream Channel Protection – Implementation and Enforcement) – Provide the site-specific stream protection prescriptions consistent with objectives identified under BMPs 12.6 and 12.6a. Objectives may include the following:

- Maintain the natural flow regime.
- Provide for unobstructed passage of storm flows.
- Maintain integrity of the riparian buffer to filter sediment and other pollutants.
- Restore the natural course of any stream that has been diverted as soon as practicable.
- Maintain natural channel integrity to protect aquatic habitat and other beneficial uses.
- Prevent adverse changes to the natural stream temperature regime.

## **Soils/Wetlands**

### **General mitigation guidelines for all units**

Where shovel yarding is proposed, areas of poorly drained soils should be avoided when possible. The use of puncheon or a slash mattress to provide adequate bearing strength and prevent rutting on poorly drained organic soils is required. The puncheon mats should be scattered upon completion of yarding activities. Do not operate the shovel in muskeg or fen wetlands (BMPs 13.2 and 13.9). To prevent rutting, do not operate shovel on slopes greater than 25 percent. This guideline applies to areas where the shovel tracks are operated, not to adjacent steeper slopes. Utilize a boom, a short choker, or cable to remove logs from steeper slopes or directionally fall the trees instead.

**Wildlife**

All units comply with required Forest Plan Wildlife Standards and Guidelines.

Any nests/animals dens discovered at any time will receive the necessary standard and guideline applications.

**Old-growth Habitat**

Loss of old-growth habitat would result by harvesting proposed units. The use of 66 percent retention of the basal area with the retention of trees with differing sizes, and an emphasis on snags and dying trees, helps address this concern.

**Sitka Black-tailed Deer**

Uneven-aged silvicultural treatments help maintain the habitat value to deer and other species and reduce habitat fragmentation, another important component of maintaining deer habitat.

**Scenery**

The scenic integrity objectives (SIOs) for the project area are very low for the Timber Production LUD.

**Botany**

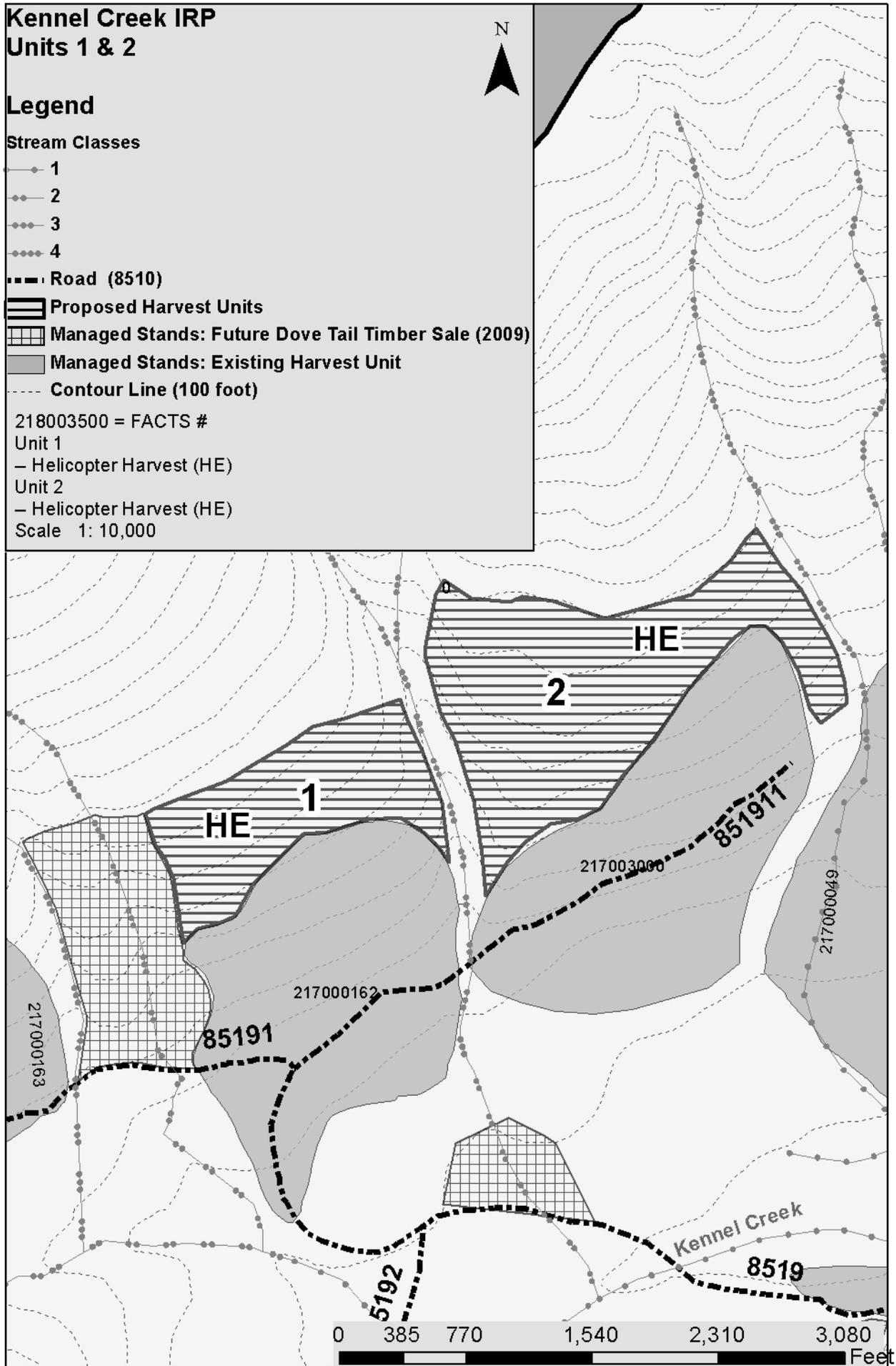
A biological evaluation was completed for sensitive species and one plant species, Alaska rein orchid (*Piperia unalascensis*), is suspected of occurring in the project area. Three rare plant species are known to occur within or near the project area (*Galium kamtschaticum*, *Listera convallarioides* and *Glyceria striata*). Habitat for all three species is open wetland or meadow settings, which will not be affected by project activities. Two of the species, *Galium kamtschaticum* and *Listera convallarioides*, are relatively common and widely dispersed on Chichagof Island. *Glyceria striata*, documented in two areas on Chichagof Island, is not currently known to be in the project area.



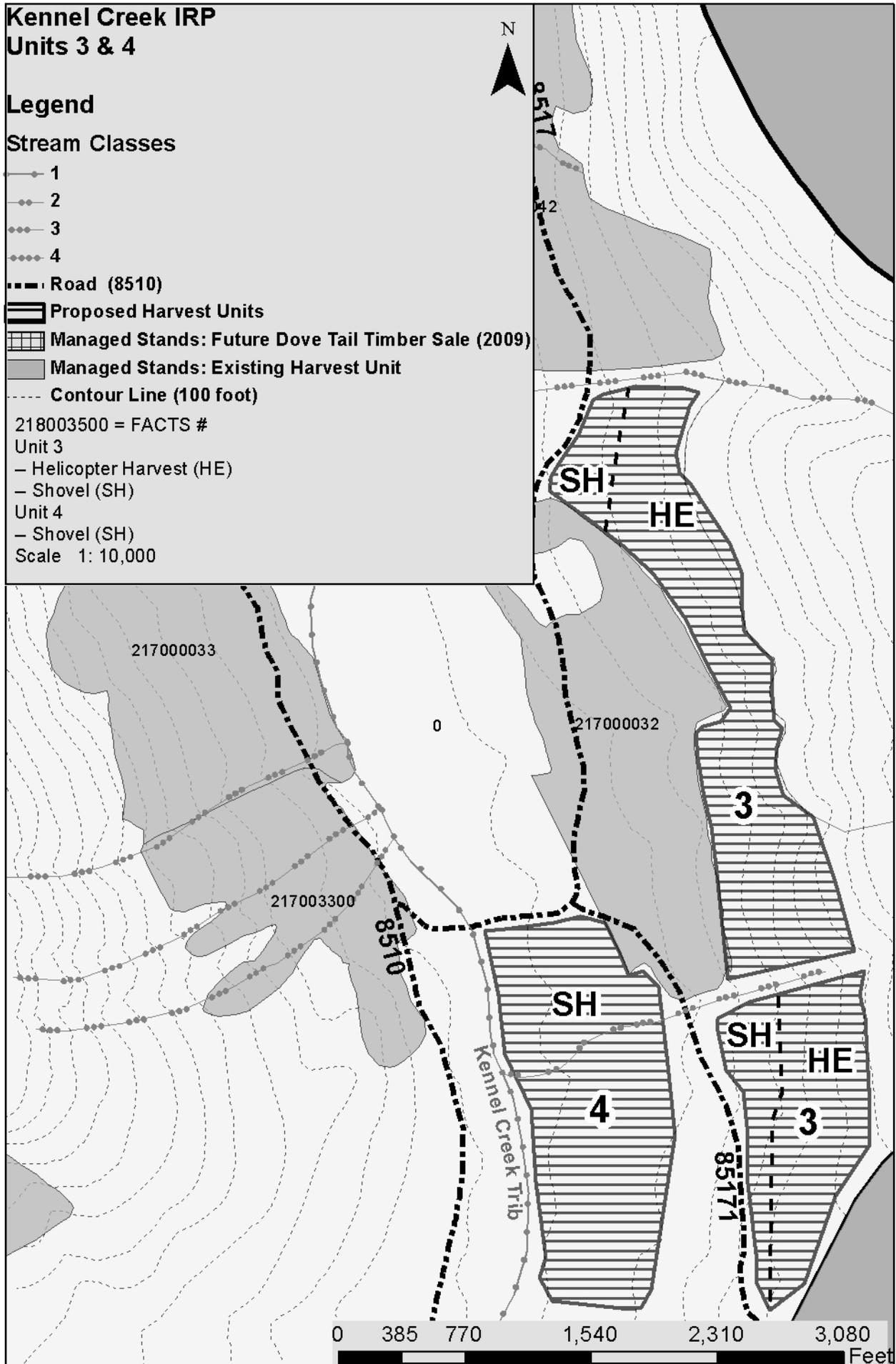
Blueberries, Tongass National Forest, Alaska. Photograph by Ashley Atkinson.

## **Unit Cards**

<b>Kennel Creek IRMP Unit Card</b>				<b>Resources</b>				
<b>Unit</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Volume (MBF)</b>	<b>Logging System, Prescription, Retention</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Aquatics</b>	<b>Soils/Wetlands</b>	<b>Wildlife</b>	<b>Timber (LUD)</b>
<b>1</b>	30	130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Helicopter</li> <li>▪ Uneven-aged</li> <li>▪ Partial cut – single tree selection</li> </ul>	Existing NFS roads 85191, 851911, 85192 and 8519	V-notch stream Process Group: HC6 Stream Class: III Buffer width: Top of v-notch. Wind firm	Full suspension will be obtained with helicopter yarding.	Travel corridors	Timber Production
<b>2</b>	30	120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Helicopter</li> <li>▪ Uneven-aged</li> <li>▪ Partial cut – single tree selection</li> </ul>	Existing NFS roads 85191, 851911, 85192 and 8519	V-notch streams Process Group: HC6 Stream Class: III Buffer width: Top of v-notch. Wind firm	Full suspension will be obtained with helicopter yarding.	Travel corridors	Timber Production



<b>Kennel Creek IRMP Unit Card</b>				<b>Resources</b>				
<b>Unit</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Volume (MBF)</b>	<b>Logging System, Prescription, Retention</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Aquatics</b>	<b>Soils/Wetlands</b>	<b>Wildlife</b>	<b>Timber (LUD)</b>
<b>3</b>	100	200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Helicopter (20 acres) and shovel</li> <li>▪ Uneven-aged</li> <li>▪ Partial cut – Single tree selection</li> </ul>	Existing NFS roads 8517, 86171 and 8510	V-notch streams Process Group: HC6 Stream Class: III Buffer width: Top of v-notch. Wind firm	Full suspension will be obtained with helicopter yarding.  Partial suspension will be obtained with shovel yarding (BMPs 13.5 and 13.9).	Travel corridors	Timber Production
<b>4</b>	90	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shovel</li> <li>▪ Uneven-aged</li> <li>▪ Partial cut – single tree selection</li> </ul>	Existing NFS roads 8517, 85171 and 8510	Kennel Creek tributary Process Group: FP3 Stream Class: I Buffer width: Min 100' Wind firm  V-notch stream Process Group: HC2 <i>Stream Class: II</i>	Partial suspension will be obtained with shovel yarding (BMPs 13.5 and 13.9).	Travel corridors	Timber Production



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