

# Soil and Water Question 2a Appendix

## Best Management Practices Implementation and Effectiveness Monitoring Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District Recreation Trip Report – Winstanley Island Cabin, McDonald Lake Cabin, and Leduc Lake Dispersed Recreation Site August 23, 2012

Summarized by Suzanne Webb

This interdisciplinary trip was conducted on the Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District on August 23, 2012. The intent of the Best Management Practices (BMP) review was primarily to provide quality control to the BMP implementation and effectiveness monitoring effort on the Forest. Participants on the interdisciplinary team (IDT) included: Carol Seitz Warmuth (Tongass Monitoring and Inventory Coordinator), Darin Silkworth (Soil Scientist), Reid Parker (Special Uses), Katie Heard (Botany), Jeff Defreest (District Ranger), and Suzanne Webb (Planning SCEP). The interdisciplinary team monitored the cabins at Winstanley Island and McDonald Lake, and a dispersed recreation site at Leduc Lake as part of the recreation monitoring component of the 2012 BMP review. The three sites are located to the north and northeast of the city of Ketchikan, AK. McDonald Lake Cabin was a substitution for Reflection Lake cabin which was reserved by guests and was unavailable during the monitoring timeframe. Monitoring was conducted on August 23, 2012 under overcast skies with no precipitation.

### Background

Cabin maintenance, as performed on the McDonald Lake Cabin, falls under the categorical exclusion in Forest Service Handbook section 1909.15, Chapter 30, Section 32.12 (5) *Repair and maintenance of recreation sites and facilities*. Cabin maintenance is considered to be a routine activity with no extraordinary circumstances that could result in significant individual or cumulative effects on the quality of the human environment. No decision memo is required for the cabin maintenance category, so no decision memo was issued for McDonald Lake cabin maintenance. There is no categorical exclusion for cabin replacement in the Forest Service Handbook. Therefore, the Winstanley Island Cabin replacement project required an Environmental Assessment, but none was completed. Additionally, the Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Outfitter Guide Management Plan provides direction for all recreation sites in the Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District. The Record of Decision for the Outfitter Guide Management Plan was published in January 2012.

Implementation monitoring is intended to address water quality concerns. This monitoring reports on whether water quality resources are being protected, and if Clean Water Act objectives were met upon project implementation. Effectiveness monitoring focuses on erosion control, delivery of sediment, chemicals, fuel, wastes, and trash pollutants to adjacent water bodies. Monitoring of implementation and effectiveness of BMPs applied to recreation management is accomplished with nine different evaluation forms. The evaluation forms assess developed recreation sites (form rec A), dispersed use recreation (form rec B), motorized and non-motorized trail construction, re-routing and soil disturbance maintenance (form rec C), motorized and non-motorized trail operation and use (form rec D), motorized vehicle use areas (form rec E), pack and riding stock use areas (form rec F), watercraft launches (form rec G), ski area construction or reconstruction (form rec H), and ski area operation and maintenance (form rec I). These evaluation protocols were drafted by a team of recreation and other resource specialists from around the nation and across multiple levels of the agency in 2011.

As part of the national pilot program implementing these protocols, the Tongass National Forest utilized two of these protocols for implementation and effectiveness monitoring of recreation resources in 2012 on the Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District. The two protocols used, developed recreation sites (form rec

A), and dispersed recreation (form rec B), were distributed over three locations. The three recreation sites were chosen for their proximity to aquatic resources (fish streams, salt water, and fresh water lakes), public accessibility, and the recent timeline in which work was completed.

Protocols for monitoring developed recreation sites are based on observations of two main areas: along a single water body transect, and along all trails (Forest Service and user created) leading from the site into an aquatic management zone (AMZ) or to a water body. An AMZ is any longitudinal area adjacent to a water body that is either within or adjacent to the area being evaluated or sampled. In many instances the trails will extend into the water body. A transect of a prescribed distance along a water body is established and walked by the IDT. The transect is established in accordance with national evaluation protocols developed for recreation management. The IDT looks for evidence of bank trampling or instability, erosion, sediment deposition, human or animal waste, trash, chemical or fuel spills or leaks, or other indicators of impacts to water quality within the boundaries of the transect. Trails are evaluated along a similar basis, looking for evidence of impacts to water quality along a transect, specifically where the trails intersect water bodies or AMZ.

For dispersed recreation monitoring, protocols are based on observations from two areas: along a single water body transect, and along all trails (Forest Service and user-created) leading from the site into an AMZ or to a water body. In many instances, the trails will extend to the water body. If the site is in the AMZ, the trails automatically will be in the AMZ. Effectiveness monitoring includes questions for observations made along the water body transect and for observations made along the trails.

## Monitoring Results

### Winstanley Island Cabin – *Developed Recreation Sites: Rec A*

The Winstanley Island Cabin is located in the Misty-Fjords National Monument Wilderness on salt water approximately thirty air miles, or forth five miles by boat, east of Ketchikan on the east side of the Behm Canal, on Winstanley Island, between Rudyerd and Smeaton Bays. Access is only by boat or floatplane.



**Picture 1.** Winstanley Island cabin beach

The site is relatively flat, at an elevation of eight feet above mean high tide, and is protected from northeasterly winds. A large gravelly beach presents a favorable landing approach for floatplanes and boats.

The cabin offers access to the salmon fishing grounds around Smeaton Island and Short Pass. The site is available year round for the primary recreation uses of camping, fishing, and boating, and is operated by the Forest Service. Several trails are within a short distance of the site presenting an opportunity for hunting Sitka blacktail deer, brown bear, black bear, and goat. Adjacent lakes and streams also have good population of cutthroat, Dolly Varden, and rainbow trout. The area is scenic and offers both

hiking and boating enjoyment.

There is a pit toilet and a woodshed in the vicinity of the cabin that are maintained annually, but no trash receptacles are provided. A water source exists approximately 500 feet west of the cabin along a trail

through the beach fringe. There is a short segment of hose, a few feet long, embedded in the stream bed on one end, and propped on a small boulder about a foot above the stream flow on the other end in order to direct a small flow of water into the air for easier use during times of low water.



**Picture 2.** Winstanley Island cabin

The Winstanley Island cabin was originally constructed in 1972 as a rustic style twelve by fourteen foot cabin with a wood burning stove, and sleeping space for four to six people. The cabin was completely reconstructed in 2012 in the same style and with the same amenities as the original structure, but with a slightly larger footprint at fifteen by eighteen (narrower in the back than in the front). Construction of the new facility occurred over the winter of 2011 to 2012 and construction was complete by spring of 2012. The project was completed by contract and was inspected by Clark Simpson. No National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis was done for this project, so there are no analysis documents or decision documents to

evaluate as part of the BMP monitoring. The cabin is located thirty feet from the ocean. The sixth level HUC number for this site is 190101011308 and the name of the sub-watershed is Shoalwater Pass—Frontal Behm Canal. It is not located within a municipal watershed. The site was not used for a special event during the past twelve months. The site was constructed prior to the Forest Land and Resources Management Plan. Implementation and effectiveness monitoring were conducted on site in accordance with the updated Forest Plan.

Of the three trails reviewed in this evaluation, one was a user created trail, and the other two were Forest Service created trails. The total length of trails evaluated is 1,000 feet. Of that, the length of user created trail is 100 feet. The coordinates for the site are N 55°27'15.41" and W 130°54'17.90.18". The total length of the water body transect is 900 feet. The IDT found impacts to water quality along the water body transect. Minimal amounts of trash and domestic animal or human waste and toilet paper were located at the site. The sources of the impacts are improper trash disposal and improper sanitation, caused by human actions. One percent of the length of the water body transect has evidence of impacts to water quality. There is no evidence of impacts to water quality on the trails leading to water bodies.



**Picture 3.** Winstanley Island cabin wood shed

At least part of the site evaluated exists within the AMZ as defined by the Forest Plan. As observed, there were no deferred maintenance needs related to water, aquatic, and riparian resources on site. The site has not been closed nor restricted within the last five years for purposes of resource protection or rehabilitation. Erosion control measures have been fully implemented at this recreation site and there have been no treatments to reduce water, aquatic, or riparian resource impacts during the past five years. There is an existing contingency and emergency response plan that directs treatment of chemical and fuel spills, leaks, and dumping, but it has not been put into action in the last five years because no spills, leaks, or dumping have been reported in that timeframe.

The IDT determined that neither corrective actions nor adaptive management actions are needed to improve effectiveness or implementation of water quality standards and guidelines. The only impacts noted were incidental and minor. The new cabin was placed within the footprint of the old cabin. There is no impact to the site beyond the footprint of the original cabin, and there is no evidence of the old cabin. There are no new impacts to water quality from the reconstruction project.

#### **Winstanley Island Cabin Area—*Dispersed Recreation: Rec B***

This site is the fresh water source for the cabin, located approximately 500 feet west of the cabin at the end of a rough trail at N 55°27'14.51" and W 130°54'24.69". Camping and picnicking are the primary recreational uses at this site, and sanitation facilities are available at the nearby cabin. No trash receptacles are provided on site. The site has not been used for a special event in the last twelve months. The approximate size of the site is two acres and it borders both a perennial stream and the ocean. It is not located in a municipal watershed. The sixth level HUC number for this site is 190101011308 and the name of the sub-watershed is Shoalwater Pass—Frontal Behm Canal. Implementation and effectiveness monitoring were conducted on site in accordance with the updated Forest Plan.

Part of the site is located within the AMZ, on salt water. There were no current maintenance needs related to water, aquatic, and riparian resources identified for this use area prior to evaluation. No restrictions or closures have occurred to protect water, aquatic, or riparian resources. No treatments for these resources have been applied in the last five years. Erosion control measures have been fully implemented. Although a contingency and emergency response plan exists, no spills, leaks, or dumping have been reported in the last five years. There is no evidence of potential or current impacts to water quality along either the water body transect or the trails leading to the water bodies, and no sediment transport was noted. One main trail of approximately 500 feet was reviewed in this evaluation in addition to a few short user created trails of approximately fifty feet in total.



**Picture 4.** Winstanley Island cabin water source

The IDT has determined that no corrective actions or adaptive management actions are needed to improve implementation or effectiveness of standards and guidelines to protect water quality.

The cabin receives moderate use by reservation, and it is likely that the area receives at least occasional day use also. At current levels of use there are no observable impacts to soil and water resources. There is a tree down on the path to the water source. The site is clean with little impact and no rutted soil.

### McDonald Lake Cabin – *Developed Recreation Sites: Rec A*

The McDonald Lake Cabin is a rustic style Pan-abode log cabin in a non-wilderness area, with a wood stove and sleeping space for four to six people. There is a pit toilet and a woodshed in the vicinity of the cabin, both maintained annually.



**Picture 5.** McDonald Lake cabin

The cabin was constructed in 1967 and is located about fifty miles north of Ketchikan, on Wolverine Island near the mouth of McDonald Lake. It is operated by the Forest Service. Major maintenance on the McDonald Lake Cabin was conducted in 2002, and consisted of a new roof, a deck extension, and replacement of rotten foundation posts. No NEPA analysis was done for that project, so there are no analysis documents to evaluate as part of the BMP monitoring. Only routine annual maintenance, such as outhouse pumping, and woodshed filling, has

occurred since 2002. McDonald Lake is located on the Cleveland Peninsula north of Yes Bay. The cabin is directly accessible by floatplane, and indirectly accessible by boat via the 1.5 mile McDonald Lake trail. This is a well-developed trail, composed of rustic boardwalk and natural tread, which traverses between Yes Bay and McDonald Lake. It begins on saltwater at the Yes Bay Lodge and follows Wolverine Creek to the McDonald Lake cabin on Wolverine Island. The trail was built in 1922 and started at the original cannery site. The Yes Bay Lodge was constructed on the old cannery site in 1958. From the cabin there is access to Wolverine Creek and a 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) three sided shelter. Steelhead and salmon run up Wolverine Creek, and resident trout and Dolly Varden are found in the lake. Wildlife in the area includes Sitka blacktail deer, black bear, brown bear, wolf, beaver, marten, mink, and otter. The primary recreation uses of the site are camping, fishing, and boating, and the site is available year round. The cabin site is immediately adjacent to McDonald Lake.

The coordinates for the site are N 55°56'0902" and W 131°48'32.47". The sixth level HUC number for this site is 190101010705 and the name of the sub-watershed is Wolverine Creek. It is not located within a municipal watershed. The site was not used for a special event during the past twelve months. This site was constructed prior to the Forest Land and Resources Management Plan. Implementation and effectiveness monitoring were conducted on site in accordance with the updated Forest Plan. An operation and maintenance plan for this site exists. At least part of the site evaluated is within the AMZ as defined by the Forest Plan. As observed, there were no current deferred maintenance needs related to water, aquatic, and riparian resources on site. The site has not been closed within the last five years, nor have restrictions been placed on use to protect or restore these resources. Erosion control measures have been fully implemented at this recreation site and there have been no treatments to reduce water, aquatic, or riparian resource impacts during the past five years. There is an existing contingency and emergency response plan that directs treatment of chemical and fuel spills, leaks, and dumping, but it has not been

put into action in the last five years because no spills, leaks, or dumping have been reported in that time frame.

Of the three trails reviewed in this evaluation, two were user created. The total length of trails evaluated is 100 feet and the total length of the user created trail is sixty feet. The total length of the water body transect is 250 feet. The IDT found minor impacts to water quality along ten percent of the length of the water body transect. Minor bank trampling and compaction from foot traffic were noted on both Forest Service and user created trails. The IDT determined that these impacts are a result of normal use. There is no evidence of impacts to water quality on the trails leading to water bodies.

The IDT determined that neither corrective actions nor adaptive management actions are needed to improve effectiveness or implementation. The only impacts noted by the IDT were incidental and minor impacts. Overall the site is in good condition with very little past erosion and no current erosion observed.

#### **McDonald Lake Cabin – Dispersed Recreation: Rec B**

This site is the vicinity of the McDonald Lake cabin, which is on Wolverine Island, located at the same coordinates as the cabin as listed above. The size of the site is approximately 0.5 acre. Although the dock facility and cabin seem to constrain most user activity, minor user developed trails appeared to provide access for berry picking. Camping, picnicking, hunting, fishing and berry picking are the primary recreational uses at this site, and sanitation facilities are available at the nearby cabin. The site is available year round. No trash receptacles are provided. The site has not been used for a special event in the last twelve months. It is not located in a municipal watershed. The sixth level HUC number for this site is 190101010705 and the name of the sub-watershed is Wolverine Creek. Implementation and effectiveness monitoring were conducted on site in accordance with the updated Forest Plan.

Part of the site is located within the AMZ. There are no current maintenance needs related to water, aquatic, and riparian resources identified for this use area prior to evaluation. No restrictions or closures have occurred to protect water, aquatic, or riparian resources, and no treatments have been applied in the last five years. Erosion control measures have been fully implemented. There is an existing contingency



and emergency response plan that directs treatment of chemical and fuel spills, leaks, and dumping, but it has not been put into action in the last five years because no spills, leaks, or dumping have been reported in that timeframe. There is no evidence of potential or current impacts to water quality along either the water body transect or the trails leading to the water bodies, and no sediment transport was noted. Two user created trails were reviewed in this evaluation with a total of fifty feet of trail under review.

**Picture 6.** Dispersed recreation site adjacent to McDonald Lake cabin

The IDT has determined that no corrective actions or adaptive management actions

are needed to improve implementation or effectiveness of soil and water standards and guidelines. The

cabin receives moderate use by reservation, and at current levels of use there are no observable impacts to soil and water resources. No soil damage or erosion was noted.

**Leduc Lake – Dispersed Recreation: Rec B**

The Leduc Lake dispersed recreation site is also located in the Misty-Fiords National Monument Wilderness, accessible only by floatplane. It is approximately thirty air miles north of the Winstanley Island Cabin, and approximately fifty miles northeast of Ketchikan, at N 55°54'56.93" and W 130°54'14.08". No recreation facilities exist at Leduc Lake, but there is evidence of light recreation use at the head of the lake where there are stumps of small diameter trees. There is occasional outfitter guide and hunter use. Goat hunters are the main user group, and camping and hunting are the primary recreational uses at the site. The site is extremely remote and receives very little use overall. It is unlikely that the site has been used for a special event in the last twelve months. The approximate size of the site is 0.5 acre and it is adjacent to a wet meadow and a lake. It is not located in a municipal watershed. The sixth level HUC number for this site is 190101010904 and the name of the sub-watershed is Leduc Lake. Implementation and effectiveness monitoring were conducted on site in accordance with the updated Forest Plan.

Part of the site is located within the AMZ. There were no current maintenance needs related to water, aquatic, and riparian resources identified for this use area prior to evaluation. No restrictions or closures for the purpose of protecting water, aquatic, or riparian resources have occurred, and no treatments to improve these resources have been applied in the last five years. Erosion control measures have been fully implemented. There is an existing contingency and emergency response plan, but it has not been put into



**Picture 7.** Leduc Lake dispersed recreation site

action in the last five years because no spills, leaks, or dumping have been reported in that timeframe. No evidence of potential or current impacts to water quality was observed along the water body transect.

The IDT has determined that no corrective actions or adaptive management actions are needed to improve implementation or effectiveness of soil and water standards and guidelines. There is no evidence of sediment transport, trampled vegetation, rilling, gullies, or any other sign of visible impact to water, aquatic, and riparian resources. Other observations that the IDT

made include a few small trees cut, three to five inches in diameter, and the partial wreckage of a plane from a crash that occurred in the 1980s. The wreckage is located several hundred feet to the north of the site. There is no fuel leakage. The District Ranger is investigating options for removal of the wreckage.