Pence, Sitka - FS

From: Hernandez Burke, Melinda - FS <melinda.hernandezburke@usda.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, June 11, 2019 11:57 AM
To: Dawn Jackson (ed@kake-nsn.gov); Raymond Paddock III; Ian Johnson; Cathy Needham; lil_hagoo@yahoo.com; Linsey Pierce; Robert Starbard; Walter Jack; rjack.agntribe@gmail.com; marina@kasaan.org; paula@kasaan.org; akdilligas060 @gmail.com; kyle.moselle@alaska.gov; jkookesh@gmail.com; Maisch, John C (DNR); Burt Jackson; ovkcouncil6@gmail.com
Cc: VanOrmer, Chad M -FS; Tu, Kenneth K -FS; Grewe, Nicole R -FS; Pence, Sitka - FS; Rust, Stephani D -FS; Dawe, Christine -FS
Subject: Materials for Cooperating Agency Meeting: Thursday, June 13th @ 10AM AKST
Attachments: image001.png; image002.png; image003.png; image004.png; Enc 1 - Draft Alaska Roadless Rule Excerpt.pdf; Enc 2 - Draft Purpose and Need Statement.pdf; Enc 3 - Draft Alaska Roadless Area Characteristics.pdf; Enc 4 - Draft Alaska Roadless Area Land Management Categories.pdf; Enc 5 - Draft Alternatives Summary and Comparison.pdf; Enc 6 - DEIS Alternative 1 Map.pdf; Enc 7 - DEIS Alternative 2 Map.pdf; Enc 8 - DEIS Alternative 3 Map.pdf; Enc 9 - DEIS Alternative 4 Map.pdf; Enc 10 - DEIS Alternative 5 Map.pdf; Enc 11 - DEIS Alternative 6 Map.pdf

Greetings, Cooperating Agencies!

Attached you will find 11 attachments which will be discussed on our cooperating agency meeting this Thursday, June 13th at 10AM AKST (1-888-844-9904 Passcode: 9982924). These materials are being provided in advance of the publishing of the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule and corresponding Draft Environmental Impact Statement which will initiate a 60-day public comment period anticipated to start during July 2019. These materials have also been provided to all Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations. I will also attach these materials to an updated calendar invite for our discussion on Thursday.

Melinda Hernandez Burke
Tribal Relations Program Manager

Forest Service
Alaska Region

p: 907-586-7089
c: 907-419-2372
f: 907-586-7840
melinda.hernandezburke@usda.gov

709 W. 9th Street
Juneau, AK 99801
www.fs.fed.us

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ALTERNATIVE PROPOSED RULE (ALTERNATIVE 3)

§294.52 Alaska Roadless Areas

(a) Designations. All National Forest System lands within the Tongass National Forest listed in § 294.57 are hereby designated as Alaska Roadless Areas. Alaska Roadless Areas established by this subpart shall constitute the exclusive set of National Forest System lands within the State of Alaska to which the provisions of this subpart shall apply.

(b) Priority land management categories. Alaska Roadless Areas are subdivided into three categories: Roadless Priority, Community Priority, and Watershed Priority.

§294.53 Road construction and reconstruction in Alaska Roadless Areas.

(a) A road may not be constructed or reconstructed in Alaska Roadless Areas, except as provided in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

(b) Roadless Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, a road may be constructed or reconstructed in an Alaska Roadless Area designated as Roadless Priority if the Responsible Official determines that one or more of the following circumstances exists:

(1) A road is needed pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty;

(2) The road is needed for the construction, expansion, or maintenance of essential public facilities such as airports, marine access points, and communication equipment;

(3) A road is needed to provide access to Alaska Native cultural site(s) if requested by an affected federally-recognized tribe(s);

(4) A road is needed for one of the following reasons and no other feasible routes exist or it can be demonstrated that routing through the Alaska Roadless Area is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative:

(i) a Federal Aid Highway project, authorized pursuant to Title 23 of the United States Code, that the Secretary of Agriculture determines is in the public interest or is consistent with the purposes for which the land was reserved or acquired; or

(ii) transportation needs identified by the State of Alaska's Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan that are needed for the connection of communities and development of the regional transportation system;

(5) A road is needed to conduct a response action under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) or to conduct a natural resource restoration action under CERCLA, Section 311 of the Clean Water Act, or the Oil Pollution Act;

(6) A road is needed within a designated experimental forest for research or administration or to provide administrative access to a designated experimental forest;

(7) Road realignment is needed to prevent irreparable resource damage that arises from the design, location, use, or deterioration of a road and cannot be mitigated by road maintenance. Road realignment may occur under this paragraph only if deemed essential for authorized public or private access, natural resource management, or public health and safety;

(8) A road is needed to protect public health and safety in cases of an imminent threat of flood, fire, or other catastrophic event that, without intervention, would cause the loss of life or property;

(9) A road is needed for the construction, expansion, or maintenance of a public utility system such as

municipal water and wastewater systems, biomass heating and energy systems, and hydroelectric and other renewable energy projects and related infrastructure, including transmission lines;

(10) A road is needed in conjunction with the construction, expansion, or maintenance of an authorized fishway, fish hatchery, or aquaculture facility; or

(11) Road reconstruction is needed to implement a road safety improvement project on a classified road determined to be hazardous on the basis of accident experience or accident potential on that road.

(c) Community Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, a road may be constructed or reconstructed in an Alaska Roadless Area designated as Community Priority if the Responsible Official determines that one or more of the following circumstances exists:

(1) A road is needed pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty, and no other feasible routes exist or it can be demonstrated that routing through the AKRA area is environmentally preferable and site-specific measures can be designed to minimize effects on water quality, fish habitat, fish production, fish passage, aquatic biodiversity, or soil productivity;

(2) A road is needed to provide access to Alaska Native cultural site(s) if requested by an affected federally-recognized tribe(s);

(3) A road is needed for micro sales, salvage sales, and small commercial sales less than one million board feet of timber;

(4) Road realignment is needed to prevent irreparable resource damage that arises from the design, location, use, or deterioration of a road and that cannot be mitigated by road maintenance. Road realignment may occur under this paragraph only if the road is deemed essential for public or private access, natural resource management, or public health and safety;

(5) A road is needed to conduct a response action under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) or to conduct a natural resource restoration action under CERCLA, Section 311 of the Clean Water Act, or the Oil Pollution Act;

(6) A road is needed to protect public health and safety in cases of an imminent threat of flood, fire, or other catastrophic event that, without intervention, would cause the loss of life or property;

(7) The road is needed for the construction, expansion, or maintenance of public facilities such as airports, marine access points, and communication equipment;

(8) Road reconstruction is needed to implement a road safety improvement project on a classified road determined to be hazardous on the basis of accident experience or accident potential on that road;

(9) The Secretary of Agriculture determines that a Federal Aid Highway project, authorized pursuant to Title 23 of the United States Code, is in the public interest or is consistent with the purposes for which the land was reserved or acquired and no other reasonable alternative exists;

(10) A road is needed for the construction, expansion, or maintenance of a public utility system, such as municipal water and wastewater systems, biomass heating and energy systems, and hydroelectric and other renewable energy projects and related infrastructure, including transmission lines;

(11) A road is needed in conjunction with the construction, expansion, or maintenance of an authorized fishway, fish hatchery, or aquaculture facility: or

(12) A road is needed in conjunction with the construction, expansion, or maintenance of a developed recreation site.

(d) Watershed Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, a road may be constructed or reconstructed in an Alaska Roadless Area designated as Watershed Priority if the Responsible Official determines that one or more of the following circumstances exists:

(1) A road is needed pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty. To the maximum extent permissible under such authorities, roads authorized pursuant to this provision will be limited to situations where no other feasible routes exist or it can be demonstrated that routing through the AKRA area is environmentally preferable and site-specific measures are designed to minimize effects on water quality, fish habitat, fish production, fish passage, aquatic biodiversity, or soil productivity;

(2) The Secretary of Agriculture determines that a Federal Aid Highway project, authorized pursuant to Title 23 of the United States Code, is in the public interest or is consistent with the purposes for which the land was reserved or acquired and no other reasonable alternative exists;

(3) A road is needed to conduct a response action under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) or to conduct a natural resource restoration action under CERCLA, Section 311 of the Clean Water Act, or the Oil Pollution Act;

(4) Road realignment is needed to prevent irreparable resource damage that arises from the design, location, use, or deterioration of a road and that cannot be mitigated by road maintenance. Road realignment may occur under this paragraph only if the road is deemed essential for public or private access, natural resource management, or public health and safety;

(5) Road reconstruction is needed to implement a road safety improvement project on a classified road determined to be hazardous on the basis of accident experience or accident potential on that road; or

(6) A road is needed to protect public health and safety in cases of an imminent threat of flood, fire, or other catastrophic event that, without intervention, would cause the loss of life or property.

§294.54 Timber harvest in Alaska Roadless Areas.

(a) Timber harvest is prohibited in Alaska Roadless Areas except as provided in paragraph (b), (c) and (d) of this section. Additionally, except as provided in paragraph (c), commercial old-growth timber harvest is prohibited on National Forest System lands as depicted in a map maintained by Chief's Office that identifies high priority watersheds that largely coincide with Alaska Roadless Areas, but extend beyond Alaska Roadless Area boundaries.

(b) Roadless Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, timber harvest may occur in Alaska Roadless Area designated as Roadless Priority if the Responsible Official determines that one or more of the following circumstances exists:

(1) Timber harvest is conducted pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty;

(2) Timber harvest is needed for mineral exploration and mine development, subject to existing laws and regulations;

(3) Timber harvest is needed for the cutting, customary trade, and removal of trees for the purposes of Alaska Native customary and traditional uses;

(4) Timber harvest is needed for one of the following purposes and will maintain or improve one or more of the roadless area characteristics:

(i) To maintain, restore, or improve fish and wildlife habitat; or

(ii) To maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure, and processes;

(5) Timber harvest is needed for personal or administrative use, as provided for in 36 CFR part 223;

(6) Timber harvest is needed within a designated experimental forest for research or administration;

(7) Timber harvest is needed for the construction, expansion, utilization, or maintenance of a public utility system, such as municipal water and wastewater systems, biomass heating and energy systems, and hydroelectric and other renewable energy projects and related infrastructure, including transmission lines;

(8) Timber harvest is needed for public health and safety, including removal of hazard trees; or

(9) Timber harvest is incidental to the implementation of a management activity not otherwise prohibited by this subpart, including the construction, expansion, or maintenance of authorized fishways, fish hatcheries, or aquaculture facilities.

(c) Watershed Priority. Timber harvest may occur if the Responsible Official determines that one or more of the following circumstances exists:

(1) Timber harvest is conducted pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty;

(2) The cutting, customary trade, and removal of trees for the purposes of Alaska Native customary and traditional uses, that does not degrade water quality, fish habitat, fish production, fish passage, aquatic diversity, or soil productivity;

(3) Timber harvest is needed for one of the following purposes and will maintain or improve one or more of the roadless area characteristics:

(i) To maintain, restore or improve fish and wildlife habitat; or

(ii) To maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure;

(4) Timber harvest is incidental to trail or recreation development that does not degrade water quality, fish habitat, fish production, fish passage, aquatic biodiversity, or soil productivity; or

(5) Timber harvest is needed to protect public health and safety in cases of an imminent threat of flood, fire, or other catastrophic event that, without intervention, would cause the loss of life or property.

(d) Community Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, timber harvest may occur in Alaska Roadless Area designated as Community Priority if the Responsible Official determines that one or more of the following circumstances exists:

(1) Timber harvest is conducted pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty;

(2) The cutting, customary trade, and removal of trees is for the purpose of Alaska Native customary and traditional uses;

(3) Timber harvest is undertaken as a micro sale, salvage sale, or small commercial sale less than one million board feet of timber;

(4) Timber harvest is needed for one of the following purposes and will maintain or improve one or more of the roadless area characteristics:

(i) To maintain, restore or improve fish and wildlife habitat; or

(ii) To maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure;

(5) Timber harvest is needed to protect public health and safety in cases of an imminent threat of flood, fire, or other catastrophic event that, without intervention, would cause the loss of life or property;

(6) Timber harvest is needed for personal or administrative use, as provided for in 36 CFR part 223;

(7) Timber harvest is needed for the construction, expansion, utilization, or maintenance of a public utility system, such as municipal water and wastewater systems, biomass heating and energy systems, and hydroelectric and other renewable energy projects and related infrastructure, including transmission lines; or

(8) Timber harvest is incidental to the implementation of a management activity not otherwise prohibited by this subpart, including trail or recreation development; and the construction, expansion, or maintenance of authorized fishways, fish hatcheries, or aquaculture facilities.

§294.55 Corrections and modifications.
Administrative correction or modification of designations made pursuant to this subpart may be made as follows:
(a) Administrative corrections to boundaries. The Regional Forester for the Alaska Region may issue administrative corrections to the boundaries of an Alaska Roadless Area and/or high priority watersheds after a 30-day public notice and opportunity to comment period. Administrative corrections are limited to adjustments that remedy clerical errors, typographical errors, mapping errors, improvements in mapping technology, conformance to statutory or regulatory changes, or incorporation of changes due to land exchanges.
(b) Administrative modifications to Classifications and Boundaries. The Regional Forester for the Alaska Region may issue modifications to the classifications and boundaries of an Alaska Roadless Area and/or high priority watersheds after a 45-day public notice and opportunity to comment period.
(c) The procedures set forth in paragraphs (a) and (b) of this subsection shall also apply to any correction or modification of an inventoried roadless area boundaries within the Chugach National Forest as established pursuant to 66 FR 3244 (Jan. 12, 2001).

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSED RULE (ALTERNTIVE 4)

§294.52 Alaska Roadless Areas
(a) Designations. All National Forest System lands within the Tongass National Forest listed in § 294.57 are hereby designated as Alaska Roadless Areas. Alaska Roadless Areas established by this subpart shall constitute the exclusive set of National Forest System lands within the State of Alaska to which the provisions of this subpart shall apply.
(b) Priority land management categories. Alaska Roadless Areas are subdivided into three categories: LUD II Priority, Roadless Priority, and Timber Priority.

§294.53 Road construction and reconstruction in Alaska Roadless Areas.
(a) A road may not be constructed or reconstructed in Alaska Roadless Areas, except as provided in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section.
(b) LUD II Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, a road may be constructed or reconstructed in an Alaska Roadless Area designated as LUD II Priority if the Responsible Official determines that the road construction or reconstruction is consistent with the legislated management restrictions established in Section 201 of the Tongass Timber Reform Act or a road is needed pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty.
(c) Roadless Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, a road may be constructed or reconstructed in an Alaska Roadless Area designated as Roadless Priority if the Responsible Official determines that one or more of the following circumstances exists:

(1) A road is needed pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty;
(2) The road is needed for the construction, expansion, or maintenance of essential public facilities such as airports, marine access points, and communication equipment;

(3) A road is needed to provide access to Alaska Native cultural site(s) if requested by an affected federally-recognized tribe(s);

(4) A road is needed for one of the following reasons and no other feasible routes exist or it can be demonstrated that routing through the Alaska Roadless Area is the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative:

(i) a Federal Aid Highway project, authorized pursuant to Title 23 of the United States Code, that the Secretary of Agriculture determines is in the public interest or is consistent with the purposes for which the land was reserved or acquired; or

(ii) transportation needs identified by the State of Alaska's Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan that are needed for the connection of communities and development of the regional transportation system;

(5) A road is needed to conduct a response action under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) or to conduct a natural resource restoration action under CERCLA, Section 311 of the Clean Water Act, or the Oil Pollution Act;

(6) A road is needed within a designated experimental forest for research or administration, or to provide administrative access to a designated experimental forest;

(7) Road realignment is needed to prevent irreparable resource damage that arises from the design, location, use, or deterioration of a road and cannot be mitigated by road maintenance. Road realignment may occur under this paragraph only if the road is deemed essential for authorized public or private access, natural resource management, or public health and safety;

(8) A road is needed to protect public health and safety in cases of an imminent threat of flood, fire, or other catastrophic event that, without intervention, would cause the loss of life or property;

(9) A road is needed for the construction, expansion, or maintenance of a public utility system, such as municipal water and wastewater systems, biomass heating and energy systems, and hydroelectric and other renewable energy projects and related infrastructure, including transmission lines;

(10) A road is needed in conjunction with the construction, expansion, or maintenance of an authorized fishway, fish hatchery, or aquaculture facility; or

(11) Road reconstruction is needed to implement a road safety improvement project on a classified road determined to be hazardous on the basis of accident experience or accident potential on that road.

(d) Timber Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, permanent or temporary roads may be constructed, reconstructed, or maintained within the Timber Priority Alaska Roadless Areas.

§294.54 Timber harvest in Alaska Roadless Areas.

(a) Timber harvest is prohibited in Alaska Roadless Areas except as provided in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section.

(b) LUD II Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, timber harvest may occur in Alaska Roadless Areas designated as LUD II Priority if the Responsible Official determines that timber harvest is consistent with the legislated management restrictions established in Section 201 of the Tongass Timber Reform Act or timber harvest is conducted pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty.

(c) Roadless Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, timber harvest may occur in Alaska Roadless Areas designated as Roadless Priority if the Responsible Official determines that one or more of the following circumstances exists:

(1) Timber harvest is conducted pursuant to reserved or outstanding rights, or as provided for by statute or treaty;
(2) Timber harvest is needed for mineral exploration and mine development, subject to existing laws and regulations;
(3) Timber harvest is needed for the cutting, customary trade, and removal of trees for the purposes of Alaska Native customary and traditional uses;
(4) Timber harvest is needed for one of the following purposes and will maintain or improve one or more of the roadless area characteristics:
(i) To maintain, restore, or improve fish and wildlife habitat; or
(ii) To maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure, and processes;
(5) Timber harvest is needed for personal or administrative use, as provided for in 36 CFR part 223;
(6) Timber harvest is needed within a designated experimental forest for research or administration;
(7) Timber harvest is needed for the construction, expansion, utilization, or maintenance of a public utility system, such as municipal water and wastewater systems, biomass heating and energy systems, and hydroelectric and other renewable energy projects and related infrastructure, including transmission lines;
(8) Timber harvest is needed for public health and safety, including removal of hazard trees; or
(9) Timber harvest is incidental to the implementation of a management activity not otherwise prohibited by this subpart, including construction, expansion, or maintenance of authorized fishways, fish hatcheries, or aquaculture facilities.

(d) Timber Priority. Notwithstanding the prohibition in paragraph (a) of this section, timber may be cut, sold, or removed in lands designated Timber Priority Alaska Roadless Areas.

§294.55 Corrections and modifications.
Same language as ALTERNATIVE PROPOSED RULE (Alternative 3).

Chapter 1

Purpose of and Need for Action

The Forest Service has prepared this draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant federal laws and regulations. This DEIS discloses the potential environmental consequences that may result from the alternatives considered for the proposed Alaska Roadless Rules.

Additional documentation that describes DEIS development, the analyses of the effects of the alternatives considered on forest resources, public involvement, and other relevant documents may be found within the record located at the Forest Service's Alaska Region Office, in the Juneau Federal Building at 709 W. 9th Street, Juneau, Alaska.

Background

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule (2001 Roadless Rule) was promulgated in January 2001 at Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 294 (36 CFR 294), Subpart B (66 Federal Register [FR] 3244). Currently, about 9.2 million acres (55 percent) of the Tongass are managed as "inventoried roadless areas" (IRAs).[5] Maps of IRAs, for the Tongass National Forest, are available online here.[6] IRAs contain generally undeveloped areas that are typically 5,000 acres or greater in size. The 2001 Roadless Rule applies nationwide (except Idaho and Colorado), and currently provides management direction for IRAs on 44.7 million acres of National Forests (approximately 24 percent of total National Forest System [NFS] lands) by prohibiting road construction and reconstruction and timber cutting, sale, or removal in those IRAs, with certain exceptions.

Since its promulgation, the 2001 Roadless Rule has been the subject of litigation. In 2001, the State of Alaska filed a complaint, challenging the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) promulgation of the 2001 Roadless Rule and its application in Alaska. The USDA and the State of Alaska reached a settlement in 2003, and the USDA subsequently issued a rule temporarily exempting the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule. In 2011, a federal court (District of Alaska) set aside the Tongass National Forest's exemption and reinstated the 2001 Roadless Rule on the Tongass National Forest (with special instructions). The Alaska District Court's ruling was initially reversed by a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit, but the District Court's ruling was ultimately upheld in a 6–5 en banc ruling of the Ninth Circuit in 2015. Consequently, the 2001 Roadless Rule remains in effect in Alaska and the Forest Service continues to apply the 2001 National Rule to the Tongass and Chugach National Forests.

In January 2018, the State of Alaska submitted a petition (Appendix A) requesting that the Secretary of Agriculture consider exempting the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule, pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and the USDA's petition procedures in 7 CFR 1.28. In June 2018, the Secretary of Agriculture directed the Forest Service to begin working to develop an Alaska state-specific roadless rule. In August 2018, the Forest Service granted cooperating agency status to the State of Alaska. The Forest Service and the State of Alaska believe that the proposed action represents a unique opportunity to collaboratively resolve and provide certainty to the roadless issue in the State of Alaska. The Forest Service published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) and initiate a public rulemaking process to address the management of IRAs on the Tongass National Forest on August 30, 2018 (83 FR 44252). As stated in that NOI, the USDA proposes to develop a durable and long-lasting regulation for the conservation and management of roadless areas

[5] The original acreage of IRAs on the Tongass was approximately 9.34 million acres. As a result of ownership changes and boundary alignment corrections, including shoreline mapping adjustments, the current acreage is 9.20 million acres.

[6] https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/roadless/2001roadlessrule/maps/statemaps/?cid=fsm8_037699

on the Tongass National Forest. The state-specific roadless rule would establish a land classification system designed to conserve roadless area characteristics on the Tongass National Forest while accommodating timber harvest and road construction/reconstruction activities that are determined to be needed for forest management, economic development opportunities, and the exercise of valid existing rights or other non-discretionary legal authorities.

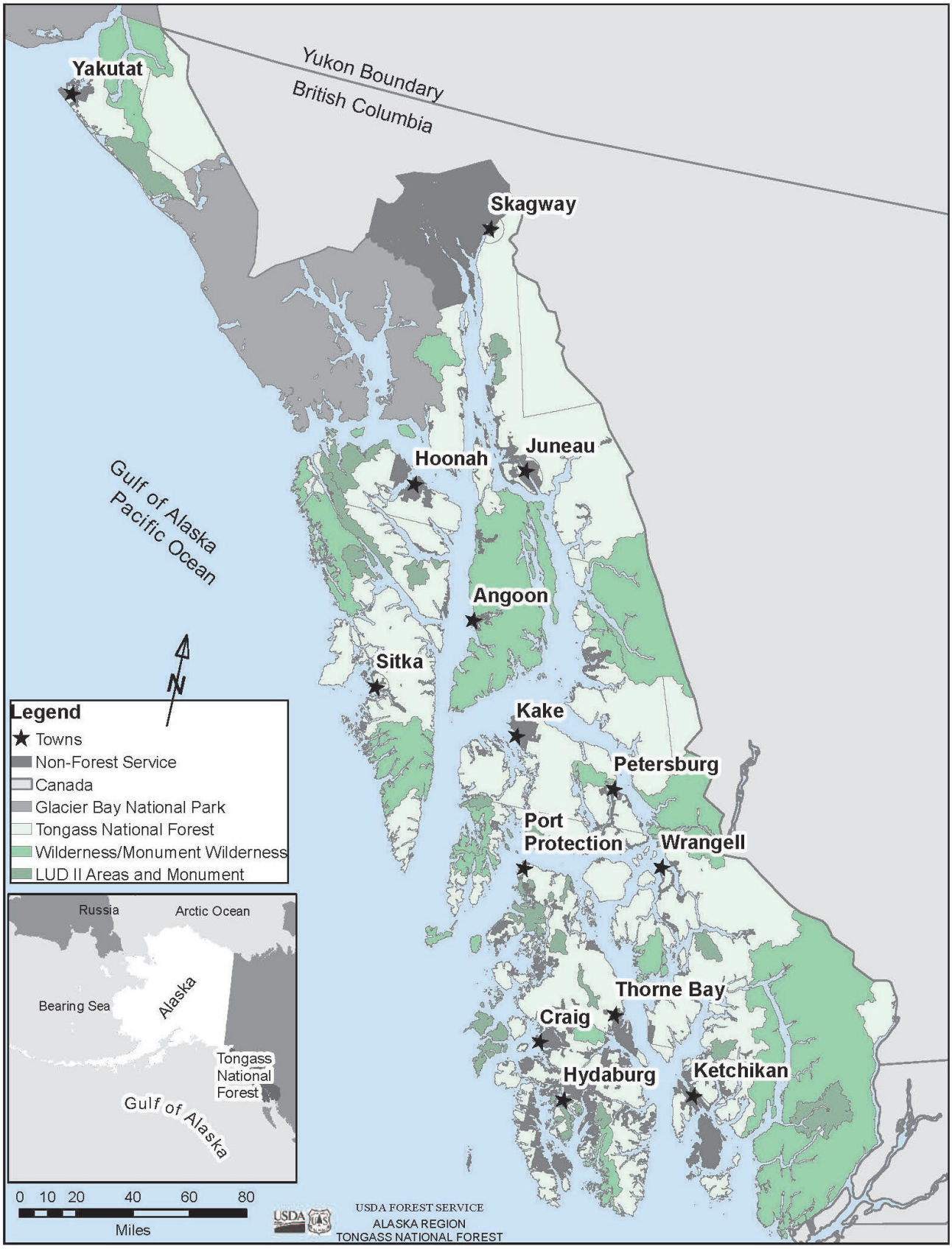
The proposed rule would not authorize any ground-disturbing activities, but rather it describes exceptions under which certain activities might be allowed within Alaska roadless areas. Before authorizing a land-use activity in roadless areas, the Forest Service must complete a site-specific environmental analysis, pursuant to the NEPA and its implementing regulations. When a specific project or activity is proposed on NFS land, the Forest Service conducts site-specific analyses of the effects associated with that project or activity and makes a decision that authorizes implementation of that project or activity.

Analysis Area

The 16.7-million-acre Tongass National Forest (hereafter Tongass or Forest) comprises approximately 7 percent of Alaska and 80 percent of percent of Southeast Alaska – Alaska's southeastern panhandle extending from the Dixon Entrance in the south to Yakutat Bay in the north, and bordered on the east by Canada and on the west by the Gulf of Alaska. The Tongass extends approximately 500 miles north to south, and approximately 120 miles east to west at its widest point. Figure 1-1 is a vicinity map of the Forest.

The Tongass includes a narrow mainland strip of steep, rugged mountains, and icefields and more than 1,000 offshore islands known as the Alexander Archipelago. Together, the islands and mainland have nearly 11,000 miles of meandering shoreline, with numerous bays and coves. A system of seaways separates the many islands and provides a protected waterway called the Inside Passage. Federal government public lands comprise approximately 95 percent of Southeast Alaska, with about 80 percent in the Tongass and the majority of the remaining lands in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. The remaining land is held by the State government, Alaska Native corporations, and other private ownerships. Most of the area of the Tongass is undeveloped. Approximately 73,000 people inhabit Southeast Alaska, primarily in 32 communities plus 2 seasonal communities located on islands or mainland coastal areas. Eight of the communities have populations greater than 1,000 persons. Most of these communities are surrounded by, or adjacent to, NFS land. Three communities are connected to other parts of the mainland by road: Haines and Skagway in the north and Hyder in the south.

Figure 1-1
Tongass National Forest Vicinity Map



Purpose and Need

In response to the State of Alaska's petition for rulemaking, the Forest Service and State of Alaska agree the controversy surrounding the management of Tongass roadless areas may be resolved through state-specific rulemaking. A long-term, durable approach to roadless area management is desired that accommodates the unique biological, social, and economic situation found in and around the Tongass. The Tongass is unique from other national forests with respect to size, percentage of IRAs, amount of NFS lands and subsequent dependency of 32 communities on federal lands, and unique Alaska and Tongass-specific statutory considerations (e.g., Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act [ANILCA]), Tongass Timber Reform Act [TTRA]).

The USDA and Forest Service believe the 2001 Roadless Rule prohibitions on timber harvest and road construction/reconstruction can be adjusted for the Tongass in a manner that meaningfully addresses local economic and development concerns while balancing roadless area conservation needs.

Proposed Action

The USDA proposes to develop a durable and long-lasting regulation for the conservation and management of roadless areas in Alaska on the Tongass. The State-specific roadless rule would establish a land classification system designed to conserve roadless area characteristics on the Tongass while affording limited opportunities for timber harvests and road construction/reconstruction activities that are determined to assist in providing forest management, economic development opportunities, and the exercise of valid existing rights or other non-discretionary legal authorities.

Decision Framework

This DEIS will inform the USDA Secretary or Undersecretary of Agriculture, in deciding whether to promulgate an Alaska state-specific rule as proposed, one of the other alternatives, or a combination of the alternatives as analyzed by the DEIS. Promulgation of a rule involves establishing regulations, which would be issued under 36 CFR Part 294, Subpart E.

Public Participation

The Forest Service published an NOI to prepare an EIS for the Alaska Roadless Rule in the FR on August 30, 2018. The NOI initiated a 45-day scoping period which ended on October 15, 2018. During this time period, the Forest Service conducted 17 public meetings including meetings in Anchorage, Alaska; Washington, DC; and communities throughout Southeast Alaska – Angoon, Craig, Gustavus, Hoonah, Kake, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Point Baker, Sitka, Tenakee Springs, Thorne Bay, Wrangell, Yakutat, and two meetings in Juneau. During the public comment scoping period following the Aug. 30, 2018 publication of the Notice of Intent of Proposed Rulemaking in the FR (83 FR 44252) which ended Oct. 15, 2018, just over 144,000 entries were logged.

Tribal and Native Corporation Participation

On July 30, 2018, the Forest Service sent letters to 32 federally-recognized tribes and 27 Alaska Native corporations, within Southeast and Southcentral Alaska, initiating government-to-government and government-to-corporation consultation on the Alaska Roadless Rule.

Cooperating Agencies

The following are cooperating agencies for the Alaska Rulemaking process:

- Angoon Community Association;
- Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska;
- Hoonah Indian Association;
- Hydaburg Community Association;
- Organized Village of Kake;

- Organized Village of Kasaan; and
- State of Alaska.

On July 30, 2018, the Forest Service invited 19 Southeast Alaska federally-recognized tribes to participate as cooperating agencies during the rulemaking process. Six tribes agreed to become cooperating agencies and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The tribes were invited to be cooperating agencies due to their specialized knowledge and expertise of land management, subsistence, natural resources, and potential impacts to specific communities within Alaska.

The State of Alaska requested cooperating agency status for the Alaska rulemaking process on June 19, 2018 and entered into an MOU on August 2, 2018. The State of Alaska is the petitioner for the rulemaking process and has special knowledge and expertise relative to natural resources, economic growth and development, resource planning, transportation, and other matters which may be affected by Forest Service management.

The State of Alaska's input as a cooperating agency was informed by the Alaska Roadless Rule Citizens Advisory Committee (the Committee). In September 2018, Governor Walker issued Administrative Order 299 to establish the Committee, which was charged with providing recommendations to assist the State in fulfilling its role as a cooperating agency. Thirteen Committee members were selected by Governor Walker to represent a diversity of perspectives, including Alaska Native corporations and tribes, fishing, timber, conservation, tourism, utilities, mining, transportation, local government, and the Alaska Division of Forestry. A Forest Service representative served in an ex officio capacity to provide technical expertise for the Committee's deliberations. The Committee met for three in-person meetings in the fall of 2018 (October 2-3 in Juneau; October 24-26 in Ketchikan; and November 6-8 in Sitka). Meetings were open to the public, and each meeting included an opportunity for public comment. A final report was produced with options for the State of Alaska to consider and was provided as part of their Cooperating Agency comments to the Forest Service.

Key Issues

The regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1501.2) require federal agencies to develop and evaluate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal that involves unresolved conflict concerning alternative uses of available resources. Public involvement was used to identify points of disagreement about the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule, and to identify key issues to use as a basis for developing and evaluating alternatives. The following three key issues were identified for the Alaska state-specific roadless rulemaking effort and will be carried forward throughout the analysis.

Key Issue 1 – Conserve roadless area characteristics

The Tongass includes large undeveloped areas, with several portions of the Forest consisting of contiguous roadless areas that exceed 1 million acres and represent large blocks of unfragmented wildlife habitats, undeveloped or natural areas, and opportunities for primitive recreation and/or solitude. This large scale of roadless areas, including wildernesses and national monuments, does not exist anywhere else in the NFS outside of Alaska. The Tongass is the largest national forest in the United States and the majority of the Tongass is in a natural condition, unlike most other national forests. It represents one of the largest, relatively intact temperate rainforests in the world.

Roadless areas are important because of their wildlife and fish habitat, recreation values, importance to multiple economic sectors, inherent passive use values, traditional properties and sacred sites for local indigenous people, and ecosystem services values they provide. Passive use values represent the value that individuals assign to a resource independent of their use of that resource and typically include existence, option, and bequest values. These values represent the value that individuals obtain from knowing that expansive roadless areas exist, knowing that they are available to visit in the future should they choose to do so, and knowing that they are available for future generations to inherit.

Ecosystem services represent the services provided to society by healthy ecosystems. These services and benefits include what some consider to be long-term life support benefits to society as a whole. Examples of ecosystem services include watershed services, soil stabilization and erosion control, improved air quality, climate regulation, carbon sequestration, and biological diversity.

The following units of measure are used to evaluate how each alternative responds to this key issue:

- Qualitative degree of impacts to roadless area characteristics;
- Total acres of roadless areas by alternative and by Alaska Roadless Area (AKRA) category;
- Acres of roadless area removed and added; and
- Acres of roadless area in development LUDs.

Key Issue 2 – Support local and regional socioeconomic well-being, Alaska Native culture, rural subsistence lifestyles, and economic opportunity across multiple economic sectors

The Tongass comprises approximately 80 percent of Southeast Alaska and therefore plays a critical role in supporting local and regional economy, promoting economic diversification, and also enhancing rural community well-being. The visitor industry, seafood industry, and resource extraction industries contribute to local jobs and income alongside public sector employment spanning federal, state, and local government. While the visitor and seafood industries are the largest private-sector employers across Southeast Alaska, resource extraction remains important in some rural communities where jobs are limited and unemployment is oftentimes high.

The Forest Service manages land for the multiple-use and sustained yield of all renewable resources. There is fragmentation and disagreement among the public regarding the best management of federal lands for economic development purposes and to support the overall economic vitality of Tongass communities. Many believe the visitor industry and seafood industries have become the mainstay of Southeast Alaska's economy and therefore should have prominence in Forest Service land management decision-making. Others note that resource extraction, including forest products and the minerals industry, continue to provide jobs and income sources in remote and isolated Southeast communities. Furthermore, Southeast Alaska residents, communities, and Alaska Native individuals and tribes provide consistent reminders of Tongass value for subsistence uses, recreational hunting and fishing, and independent travelers and outdoor enthusiasts – and that these activities yield economic value as well.

The following units of measure are used to evaluate how each alternative responds to this key issue:

- Qualitative degree of effect to forest products industry;
- Qualitative degree of effect to visitor industry;
- Qualitative degree of effect to fisheries industry;
- Qualitative degree of effect to locatable and leasable minerals development potential;
- Qualitative degree of effect to energy project development potential;
- Qualitative degree of effect to major transportation projects;
- Acres of forest land suitable for timber production (old growth and young growth);
- Acres of increase in suitable old growth by substantially altered areas, logical extensions of roaded areas, and areas more distant from roads;
- Acres of increase in high-volume suitable old growth by substantially altered areas, logical extensions of roaded areas, and areas more distant from roads;
- Qualitative degree of support for Alaska Native culture due to improved access to tree harvest for cultural purposes;
- Qualitative degree of support for subsistence lifestyles; and
- Qualitative degree of effects to communities – overall level of potential change for communities.

Key Issue 3 – Conserve terrestrial habitat, aquatic habitat, and biological diversity

The Tongass includes large, undeveloped, and natural land areas that represent expansive unfragmented blocks of wildlife habitat. This scale and size of contiguous habitat is not available elsewhere in the NFS outside of Alaska. Although wildlife species on the Tongass are associated with more than one habitat type, many inhabit old-growth forests or prey on species that inhabit old-growth forests. The Old-growth Habitat Conservation Strategy was developed to maintain the integrity of the old-growth forest ecosystem, and thereby conserve biological diversity across the Forest by retaining intact, largely undisturbed habitat. In addition, because of its predominantly undeveloped nature, a number of wide-ranging species find optimal habitat in the more remote areas of the Forest.

Fish and the aquatic resources on the Tongass support subsistence, commercial, and sport fisheries, as well as traditional and cultural values. The Tongass includes high-value, intact watersheds that were designated to be managed for intact ecological values and aquatic habitat productivity, and many commenters believe these areas should be protected so that they can continue to provide the clean water and fish habitats that are essential to the ecological and economic health of the Southeast Alaska communities and residents who rely on them.

The following units of measure are used to evaluate how each alternative responds to this key issue:

- Percent of existing and original productive old growth (POG) harvested over the long term;
- Percent of original high-volume POG harvested over the long term;
- Percent of original large-tree POG harvested over the long term;
- Acres of young-growth harvest in sensitive areas;
- Average road density over the long term;
- Percent of Wildlife Analysis Areas (WAAs) with road density <0.7 miles/square mile; and
- Qualitative ratings of species-specific effects.

DRAFT Alaska Roadless Area Characteristics

Roadless area characteristics, as established by the 2001 Roadless Rule, are resources or features that are often present in and characterize inventoried roadless areas. These characteristics are utilized by the Forest Service in evaluating roadless area project proposals.

The State of Alaska's advisory committee provided the Governor with its own Alaska-specific perspective of roadless area characteristics by further elaborating on the unique social and cultural context, rich habitat, scenic quality, and economic importance of Alaska roadless areas. The State Advisory Committee's elaboration of the unique social and cultural context, rich habitat, scenic quality, and economic importance of Alaska roadless areas provides important context for considering local perspective for this rulemaking. The Department appreciates the thoughtful process undertaken by the State's Advisory Committee and is proposing a new definition after consideration of the State's input and the Forest Service's own reflection of roadless characteristics.

Characteristic	Description
Physical Environment	Roadless areas provide high-quality or undisturbed soil, water, and air.
Water	Roadless areas provide a variety of water resources including public drinking water sources, fish and aquatic resources, and hatchery aquatic resources.
Diversity	Roadless areas support a diversity of plant and animal communities including stands of old-growth forests.
Habitat	Roadless areas are expansive areas where high-quality intact habitat exists and ecosystems function with all their native species and components. Roadless areas serve as habitat for threatened, endangered, proposed, candidate, and sensitive species and for those species dependent on large, undisturbed areas of land.
Remoteness	Roadless areas provide economic opportunity due to rich primitive, semi-primitive motorized, and semi-primitive non-motorized classes of dispersed recreation.
Landscape	Roadless areas provide reference landscapes of relatively undisturbed areas that serve as a barometer to measure the effects of development on other parts of the landscape.
Scenery	Roadless areas have natural-appearing landscapes with high-scenic qualities that people value.
Cultural	Roadless areas are rich in traditional cultural properties and sacred sites. In Alaska indigenous peoples have been on national forests for more than 10,000 years and the forests have cultural significance.
Locally-Unique Characteristics	Roadless areas represent geographic areas with additional locally-unique characteristics specific to Alaska including: (a) important source of subsistence resources including terrestrial wildlife, waterfowl, mammals, fish, and plant-based resources; (b) rich habitat that supports multiple species of fish for personal, subsistence, sport, recreation, and commercial harvest; and (c) supports diverse economic opportunity that is especially important for rural community well-being.

DRAFT Alaska Roadless Area Land Management Categories (AKRA)

Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 6 provide a variety of management approaches within roadless areas through land management categories which include Land Use Designation (LUD) II Priority, Watershed Priority, Community Use Priority, Roadless Priority, and Timber Priority. The management categories prohibit timber harvest, road construction, and road reconstruction with a range of exceptions applied differentially across the alternatives.

Land Management Category	Alternatives Applied	Description
LUD II Priority	2, 4, 6	The LUD II Priority category would reduce confusion by eliminating overlapping statutory and roadless regulatory management direction and manage these areas only in accordance with the statutory direction. These lands will be managed in a roadless state to retain their wildland character as defined in the TTRA (Title II, Section 201) and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113-291, 128 Stat. 3729, Section 3720(e)(4)). Approximately 870,000 acres of the Tongass are congressionally designated as LUD II (826,000 acres currently are additionally designated as IRA under the 2001 Roadless Rule and 44,000 acres currently not designated as IRA). Alternatives 2 and 4 propose to designate all of the congressionally designated LUD II acres as LUD II Priority AKRAs. Alternative 6 proposes to apply the LUD II Priority category only to LUD II areas that are currently designated as IRA. Notably, Alternative 3 proposes to remove all LUD II areas from roadless designation rather than designating an AKRA category. LUD II areas under Alternative 3 would continue to be managed under their congressional designations.
Watershed Priority	2, 3	The Watershed Priority category is more protective than the 2001 Roadless Rule as it offers fewer exceptions for timber harvest, road construction, and road reconstruction. It also provides for activities specific to aquatic habitat improvement. Approximately 3,250,000 acres in Alternative 2 whilst 3,208,000 acres in Alternative 3 would be managed under this management category. The Watershed Priority category is applied to areas identified in the 2016 Forest Plan as Tongass 77 (T77) Watersheds and The Nature Conservancy (TNC)/Audubon Conservation Priority Areas. Additionally, for Alternative 3, commercial old-growth timber harvest would be prohibited on National Forest System lands in T77 and TNC/Audubon Conservation Areas including those that extend beyond Alaska Roadless Area boundaries.
Community Use Priority	3	The Community Use Priority category allows for small-scale timber harvest and associated road construction and reconstruction. In addition, it allows for infrastructure development to connect and support local communities and traditional Alaska Native cultural uses. In all cases, activities within Community Use Priority AKRAs would have to be consistent with the underlying Forest Plan LUD requirements. This is to say that even if a timber harvest, road building, or other activity would be permissible under the Alaska Roadless Rule, it may not be allowable because of Forest Plan requirements specific to the LUD that applies to the area. This management category applies to approximately 241,000 acres and is only proposed in Alternative 3 adjacent to five communities: Sitka, Wrangell, Juneau, Ketchikan, and Yakutat. However, based on cooperating agency input, the Community Use Priority should have also been applied around the communities of Hydaburg and Kake and will be accommodated in the FEIS. This management category was developed to address specific desires of some communities to retain roadless protections while allowing for small timber operators in the community, infrastructure development to support the communities, and provide for traditional Alaska Native cultural uses. The Forest Service is seeking public input on this management category, specifically with respect to whether this designation should be applied to other communities/areas. The Forest Service proposes to consider applying the Community Use Priority land management category to AKRAs either adjacent to communities or within community use areas as requested by non-profit community associations organized under State of Alaska law (Alaska Statute 10.20.005), municipal governments, or tribal governments.
Roadless Priority	2, 3, 4, 6	The Roadless Priority management category is similar to the 2001 Roadless Rule but is less restrictive and addresses Alaska-specific concerns. Specifically, it expressly provides for infrastructure development to connect and support local communities, and road construction/reconstruction for access to renewable energy and leasable minerals. The leasable minerals exception provides for roading associated with geothermal, oil, gas, and/or coal development. In addition, the Roadless Priority category includes specific exceptions that, while they are already allowed under the 2001 Roadless Rule, are included to improve overall clarity.
Timber Priority	4	The Timber Priority category allows timber harvest, road construction, and road reconstruction to facilitate timber management and provide economic opportunity. This management category applies to approximately 856,000 acres and is only proposed in Alternative 4.

Alternative	Priority Use Areas	Description
1 No Action	Not Applicable	Alternative 1 is the no action alternative as required by NEPA and reflects a continuation of current land management pursuant to the 2001 Roadless Rule (see Map 1 in map packet or on CD). This alternative continues general prohibitions on tree harvest (and sale), road construction, and road reconstruction within IRAs with limited exceptions (Table 2-2). Under Alternative 1, roadless areas consist of 110 IRAs identified in the 2001 Roadless Rule. These IRAs were originally mapped in 1996 for the Tongass Forest Plan Revision and the provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule (as provided for by the Court's reinstatement Order) would apply to those IRAs (summarized below). As a result of ownership changes and boundary alignment corrections these IRAs currently encompass 9.2 million acres1 of NFS land. Provisions of the 2001 Roadless Rule remain intact across the 110 IRAs, encompassing approximately 55 percent of the Tongass National Forest. Under Alternative 1, IRA boundary modifications would continue to require rulemaking except for minor administrative corrections.
2 Roaded Roadless	LUD II Watershed Roadless	Alternative 2 provides limited additional timber harvest opportunity while maximizing roadless area protections. It removes approximately 113,000 acres from roadless designation that have been substantially altered as identified by known prior road construction or timber harvest. These areas are generally known as "roaded roadless" areas but also include additional areas considered to be substantially altered. Removed areas include both development and non-development LUDs. Alternative 2 also maximizes the geographic scope of roadless area protection by adding 133,000 acres as AKRAs. The 133,000 acres of added roadless areas include portions of congressionally-designated LUD II areas not included as IRAs under the 2001 Roadless Rule, currently unroaded small islands, and unroaded areas greater than 5,000 acres as identified by prior forest planning efforts. Adding additional roadless protections to unroaded islands provides for long-term, continued recreational and outfitter and guide opportunities on these islands. After removals and additions, Alternative 2 consists of 9.22 million inventoried roadless acres or about 20,000 more roadless acres than under Alternative 1. The 9.22 million acres are designated to three AKRA land management categories: LUD II Priority, Watershed Priority, and Roadless Priority (see Map 2 in map packet or on CD). Alternative 2 applies the most protective AKRA category, Watershed Priority, to 3.25 million acres, primarily identified as T77 Watersheds and TNC/Audubon Conservation Priority Areas in the Forest Plan. The Watershed Priority category is considered most protective because it includes fewer exceptions than the 2001 Roadless Rule, while still allowing activities needed for watershed protection, maintenance, or improvement. Alternative 2 converts a net total of 18,000 old-growth forest acres and 10,000 young-growth acres, previously identified as unsuitable for timber harvest, to suitable.
3 Logical Extension (Preferred)	Watershed Roadless Community Use	Alternative 3 is one of two preferred alternatives and provides moderate additional timber harvest opportunity while maintaining substantial roadless area protections. Alternative 3 maintains roadless protections for T77 Watersheds and TNC/Audubon Conservation Priority Areas inside roadless areas and also prohibits old-growth commercial harvest in these areas outside of roadless areas (similar to the Forest Plan). Additional timber harvest opportunity is provided by removing substantially-altered roadless areas (including roaded roadless, similar to Alternative 2) and extending the bounds of these areas to logical end points of existing road and timber harvest systems (about 212,000 acres), generally defined as the nearest watershed boundary (i.e., ridgeline of 14th-field hydrologic unit) from an existing road system. Removing these areas from the roadless inventory represents the logical extensions of substantially altered acres from existing infrastructure and likely encompasses the more economically feasible locations for future timber harvest with the least impact to roadless characteristics. Additional timber harvest opportunity is provided by designation of Community Use Priority AKRAs around five communities, namely Yakutat, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, and Wrangell. Alternative 3 removes approximately 1.2 million acres from roadless designation including both development and non-development LUD acres. Alternative 3 also adds 105,000 acres to AKRAs as Roadless Priority including unroaded small islands and unroaded areas greater than 5,000 acres as identified by prior forest planning efforts. Adding additional roadless protections to unroaded islands provides for long-term, continued recreational and outfitter and guide opportunities on these islands. Alternative 3 applies the most protective AKRA category, Watershed Priority, to 3.21 million acres identified as T77 Watersheds and TNC/Audubon Conservation Priority Areas. The Watershed Priority category is considered most protective because it includes fewer exceptions than the 2001 Roadless Rule, while still allowing activities needed for watershed protection, maintenance, or improvement. Additionally, for Alternative 3, commercial old-growth timber harvest would be prohibited on National Forest System lands in T77 and TNC/Audubon Conservation Areas including those that extend beyond Alaska Roadless Area boundaries. The remaining roadless areas include 4.65 million acres in Roadless Priority and 0.24 million acres in Community Use Priority (see Map 3 in map packet or on CD). Alternative 3 proposes a net decrease of 1.1 million roadless acres, as compared to the no action alternative, and includes both development and non-development LUDs. Roadless area designation would be removed from the 826,000 congressionally-designated LUD II acres that are currently within an

		inventoried roadless area. The removal of roadless designation from congressionally-designated LUD II acres represents the majority of the decrease in roadless acres proposed under Alternative 3. Removing roadless designation from LUD II acres retains the congressional mandate for LUD II areas and assures the lands will be managed "in a roadless state to retain their wildland character" as provided for in the 1986 and 1979 plans. Alternative 3 would convert a net of 76,000 old-growth acres and 14,000 young-growth acres, previously identified as unsuitable timber lands, to suitable timber lands. Additional Protections Note - T77 Watersheds and TNC Audubon Conservation Priority Areas: Watershed protection is a key element of roadless management. Watersheds are highly valued sources of municipal drinking water, support fisheries and wildlife habitat, and can act as keystones for economic activities. In Alternative 3, areas identified in the 2016 Tongass Forest Plan as T77 watersheds and TNC/Audubon Conservation Priority Areas (high-priority watershed areas) outside of inventoried roadless areas would be afforded added protection through the roadless regulation. Specifically, old-growth timber harvest would be prohibited within these areas, subject to the described exceptions. A prohibition on old-growth harvesting currently exists through the Forest Plan. But Alternative 3 establishes regulatory continuity between these roadless and watershed management systems given how extensively they overlap (the listed watersheds comprise over half of the Tongass' roadless areas, and approximately 90 percent of the watershed areas are currently within roadless area boundaries). Thus, the old-growth harvest prohibition would be extended beyond the designated roadless area boundaries in order to maintain the balance and integrity of the watershed protection system. As with all roadless rule provisions, the new prohibition would supersede the current and future forest plans, with the plan continuing to provide management direction in other regards. In this manner, Alternative 3 affords high-priority watershed areas greater protection than under the 2001 Roadless Rule. Young-growth commercial timber harvest outside of AKRAs within these high-priority watershed areas is not prohibited. This would apply to about 377,000 acres outside of roadless areas.
4 Partial Development LUDs (Preferred)	LUD II Roadless Timber	Alternative 4 is one of two preferred alternatives and provides significant additional timber harvest opportunity while maintaining roadless protections for Scenic Viewsheds LUDs and T77/TNC-Audubon Conservation Priority Areas that are in roadless areas. Approximately 375,000 acres are removed from roadless designation, including substantially-altered areas and logical extensions of substantially-altered acres (similar to Alternatives 2 and 3), along with selected additional locations for potentially feasible economic timber sales. These acres are also converted from unsuitable to suitable timber lands, resulting in significant additional timber harvest opportunity. Protection is maintained for Scenic Viewsheds, and most T77 Watersheds and TNC/Audubon Conservation Priority Areas by designating them as Roadless Priority category AKRAs. Additionally, Alternative 4 adds 32,000 acres to AKRA as LUD II Priority category. These added roadless acres are LUD II areas that were not designated as roadless under the 2001 Roadless Rule. No additional lands would be added to AKRAs. The net result of removals and additions under Alternative 4 is 8.86 million roadless acres, which are designated into three categories of AKRAs: LUD II Priority, Roadless Priority, and Timber Priority (see Map 4 in map packet or on CD). This alternative was developed to provide for a high level of timber management opportunities thus, timber management is permitted in the Timber Priority category, which consists of the Timber Production and Modified Landscape LUDs, as identified in the Forest Plan. Alternative 4 proposes a net decrease of 343,000 roadless acres as compared to the no action alternative. However, the total net decrease is substantially higher when also including Timber Priority category acres, yielding a combined decrease of 1.09 million total acres. Alternative 4 converts a net of 158,000 old-growth acres and 15,000 young-growth acres previously identified as unsuitable timber lands to suitable timber lands.
5 Full Exemption	Not Applicable	Alternative 5 provides maximum additional timber harvest opportunity and is the full exemption alternative, which was requested by the State of Alaska's petition (Appendix A). It removes all 9.20 million inventoried roadless acres on the Tongass from roadless protection (see Map 5 in map packet or on CD). Acres removed from roadless protection would continue to be managed by other applicable statutes, regulations, and the Forest Plan. Alternative 5 would add the following provision into the "Scope and Applicability" section of the 2001 Roadless Rule: "This subpart does not apply to road construction, road reconstruction, or the cutting, sale, or removal of timber in inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest." Alternative 5 also converts a net total of 165,000 old-growth acres and 20,000 young-growth acres previously identified as unsuitable timber lands to suitable timber lands.
6 All Development LUDs	LUD II Roadless	Alternative 6 provides maximum additional timber harvest opportunity by removing roadless protections from all Timber Development, Modified Landscape, and Scenic Viewshed LUDs identified by the Forest Plan, including T77 Watersheds and TNC/Audubon Conservation Priority Areas within the aforementioned development LUDs. Areas with mineral potential, as identified by the Forest Plan's minerals overlay, are also removed from roadless protection (see Map 6 in map packet or on CD). In total, 2.30 million acres would be removed from roadless area protection including mineral overlay acres and the majority of development LUDs, including conservation-designated acres. The remaining 6.91 million roadless acres are designated to two AKRA land management categories: Roadless Priority and LUD II Priority (see Map 6 in map packet or on CD). Alternative 6 also converts a net total of 165,000 old-growth acres and 17,000 young-growth acres previously identified as unsuitable timber lands to suitable timber lands.

Roadless Areas by Alternative and Management Category

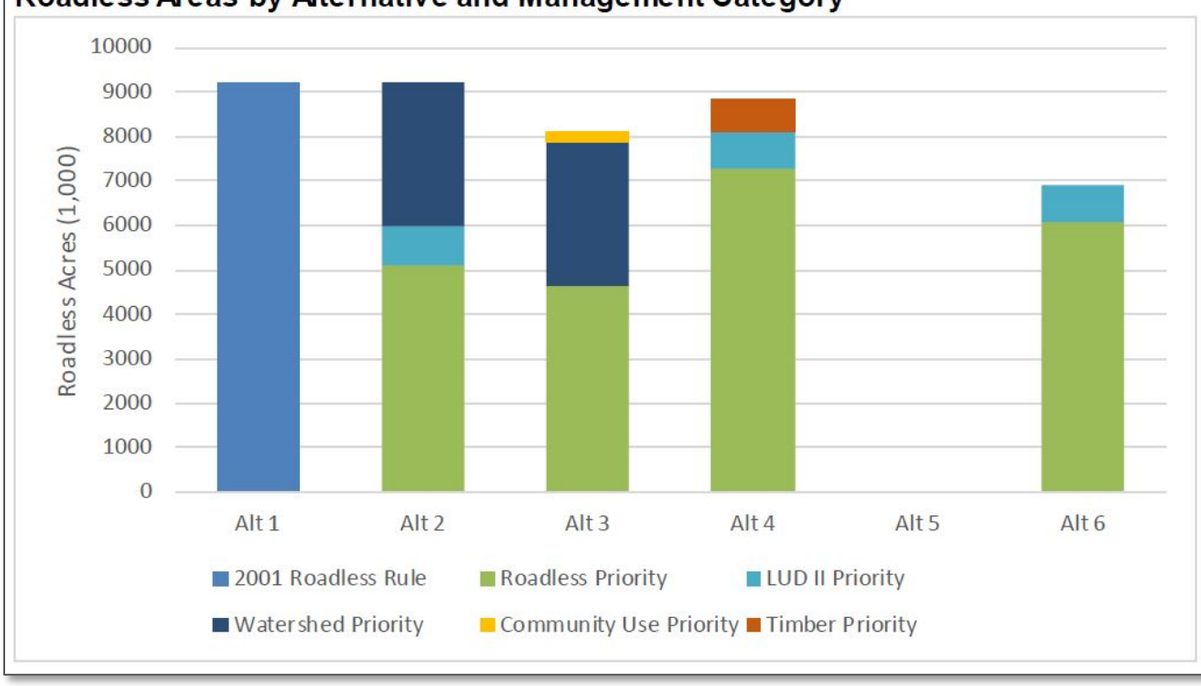
Roadless Category (acres)	Alternative 1 No Action	2 Roaded Roadless	3 Logical Extension	4 Partial Dev. LUDs[1]	5 Full Exemption	6 All Dev. LUDs
Total Roadless Area	9,200,000	9,220,000	8,103,000	8,857,000	0	6,905,000
AKRA Management Categories						
Roadless Priority	N/A	5,114,000	4,653,000	7,252,000	0	6,078,000
LUD II Priority	N/A	856,000	0	856,000	0	828,000
Watershed Priority	N/A	3,250,000	3,208,000	0	0	0
Community Use Priority	N/A	0	241,000	0	0	0
Timber Priority	N/A	0	0	749,000	0	0
Change in Roadless Area Acres						
Roadless Area Removed	0	113,000	1,202,000	375,000	9,200,000	2,298,000
Roadless Area Added	0	133,000	105,000	32,000	0	3,000
Net Change	0	20,000	-1,098,000	-343,000	-9,200,000	-2,295,000
Old-Growth Acres Suitable for Harvest						
Total Acres	230,000	247,000	305,000	388,000	395,000	395,000
Net Change	0	18,000	76,000	158,000	165,000	165,000
T77 & TNC/ Audubon Conservation Priority Areas Outside of Roadless given Long-term Protection						
Total Acres	0	0	377,000	0	0	0
Potentially Suitable Old Growth Acres	0	0	49,000[2]	0	0	0

N/A = not applicable

[1] Includes Timber Production and Modified Landscape LUDs, but not Scenic View shed.

[2] Includes old growth that would be suitable except for prohibition on old-growth harvests in Tongass 77 (T77) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC)/ Audubon Conservation Priority Areas. Overall, there are 171,000 acres of old growth within T77 and TNC/ Audubon Conservation Priority Areas outside of roadless areas.

Roadless Areas by Alternative and Management Category



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Map 1: Alternative 1

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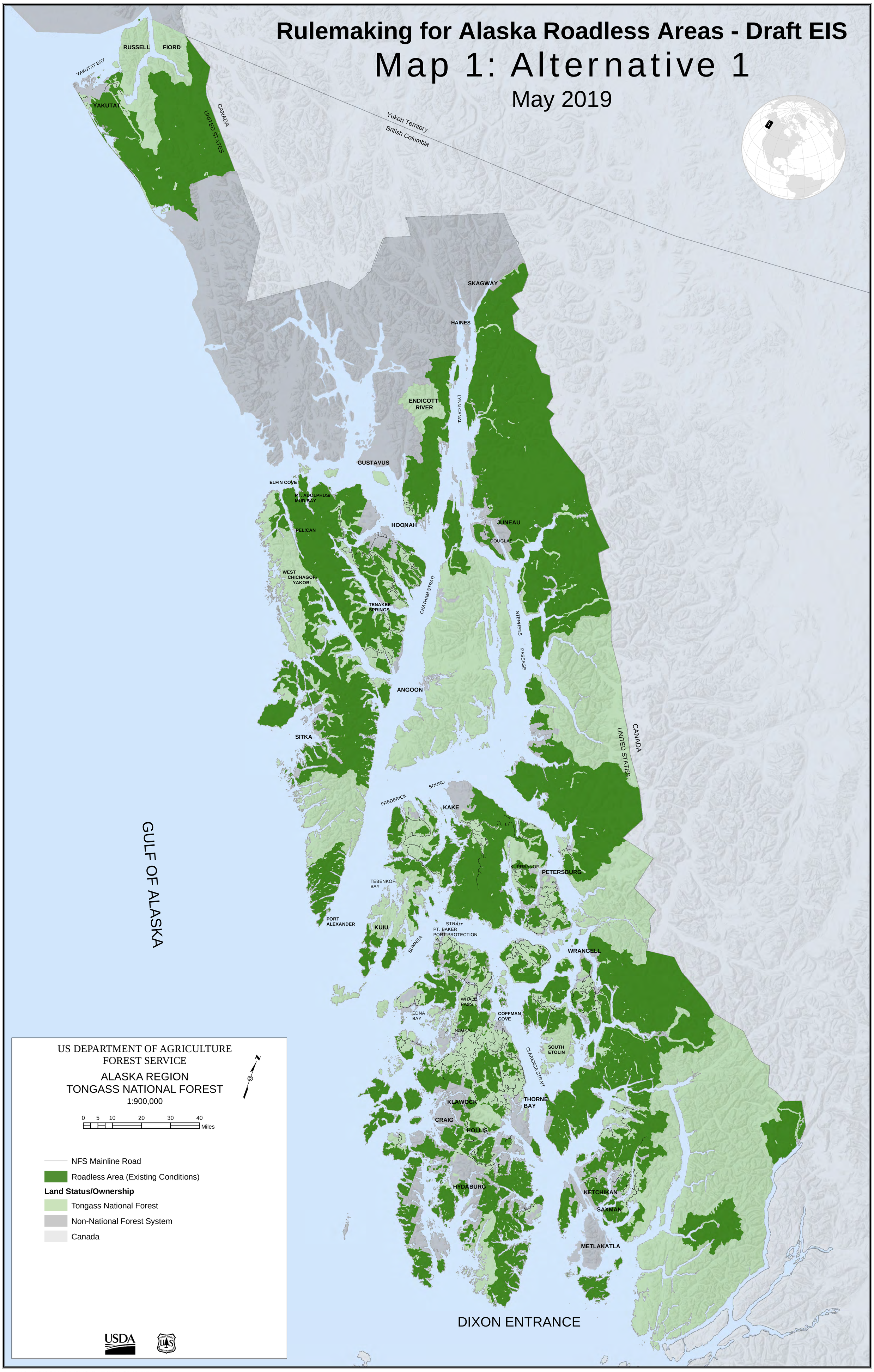

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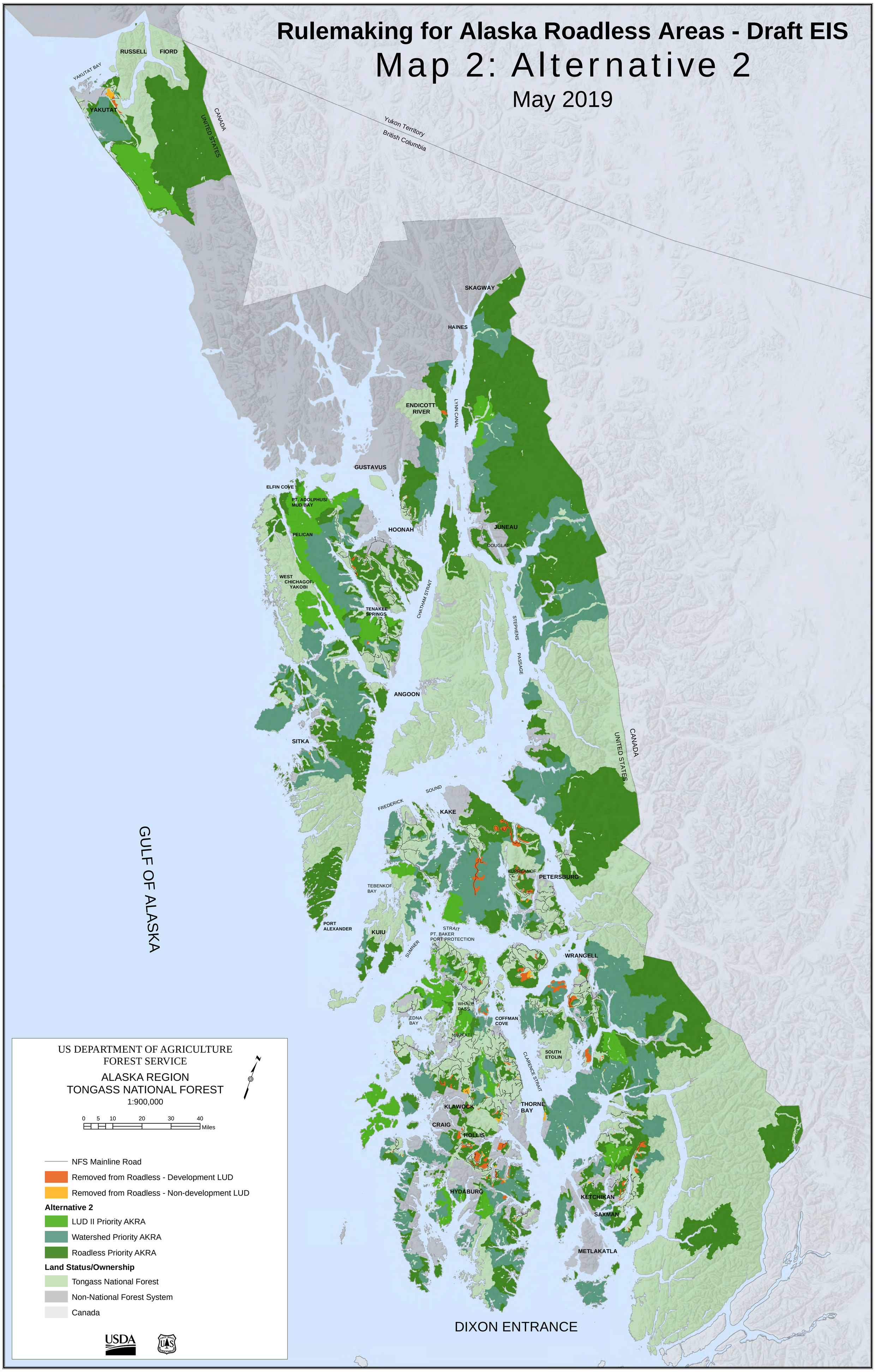
Map 2: Alternative 2

May 2019



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Map 3: Alternative 3

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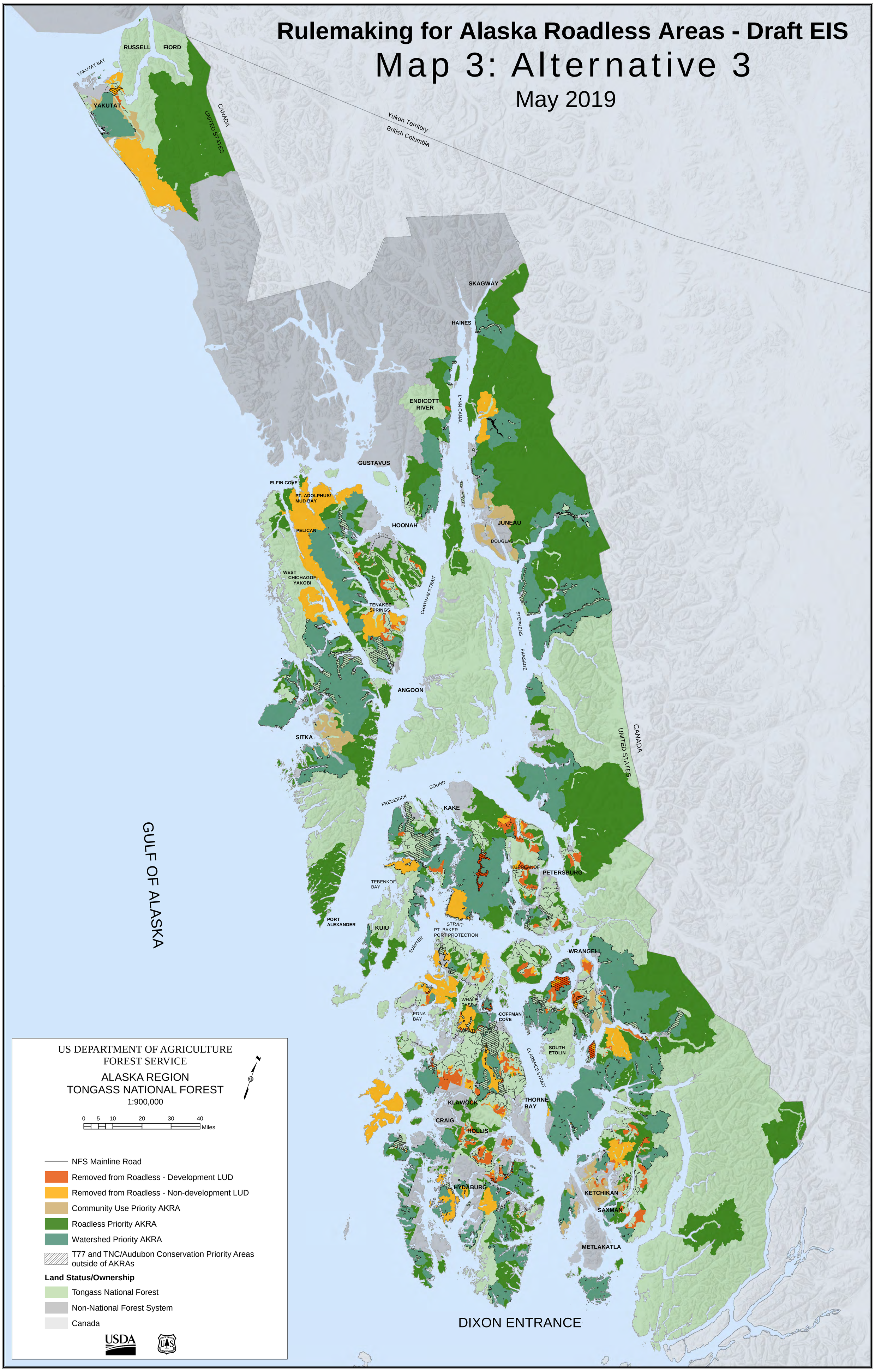

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Map 4: Alternative 4

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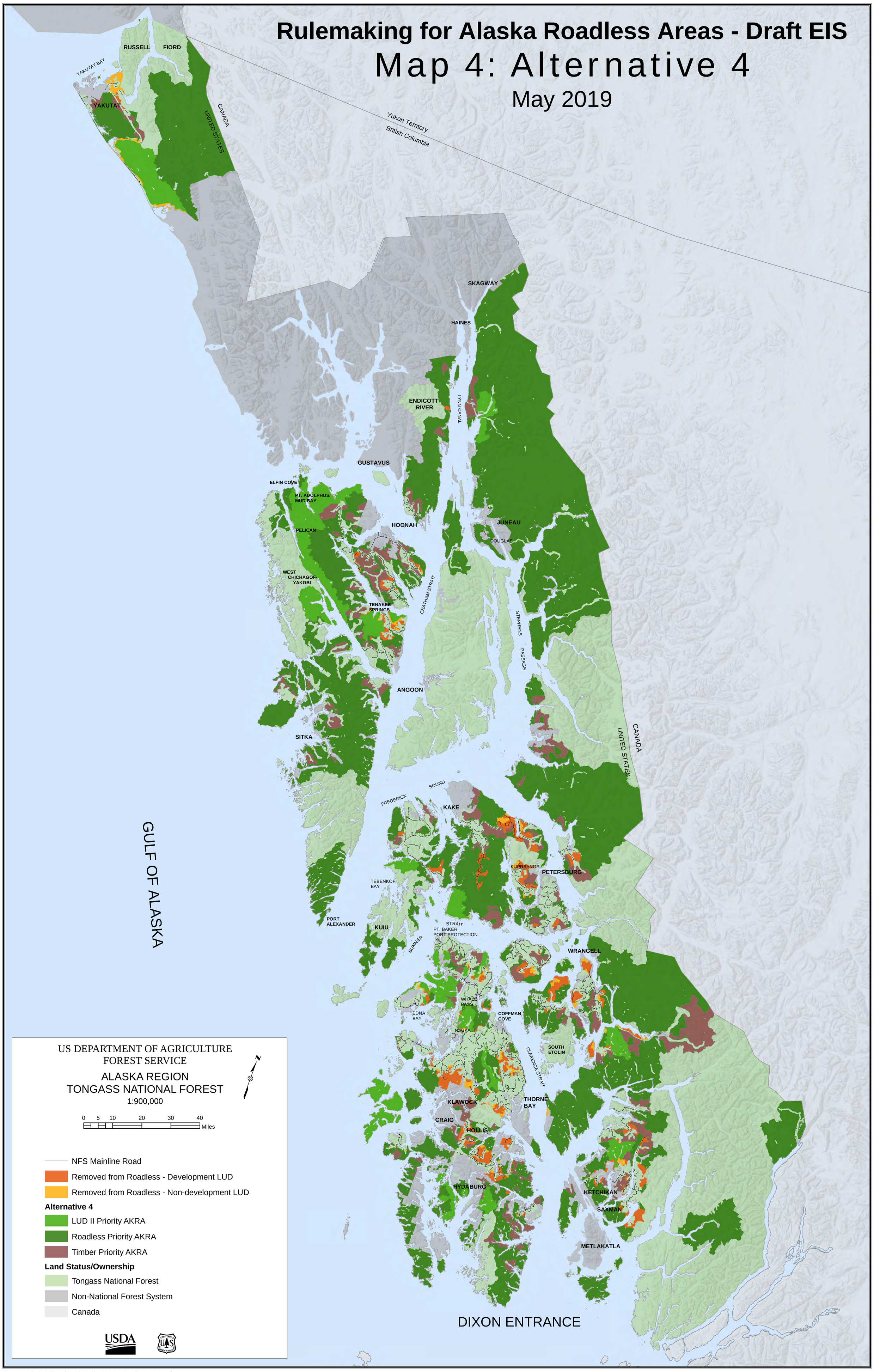

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Map 5: Alternative 5

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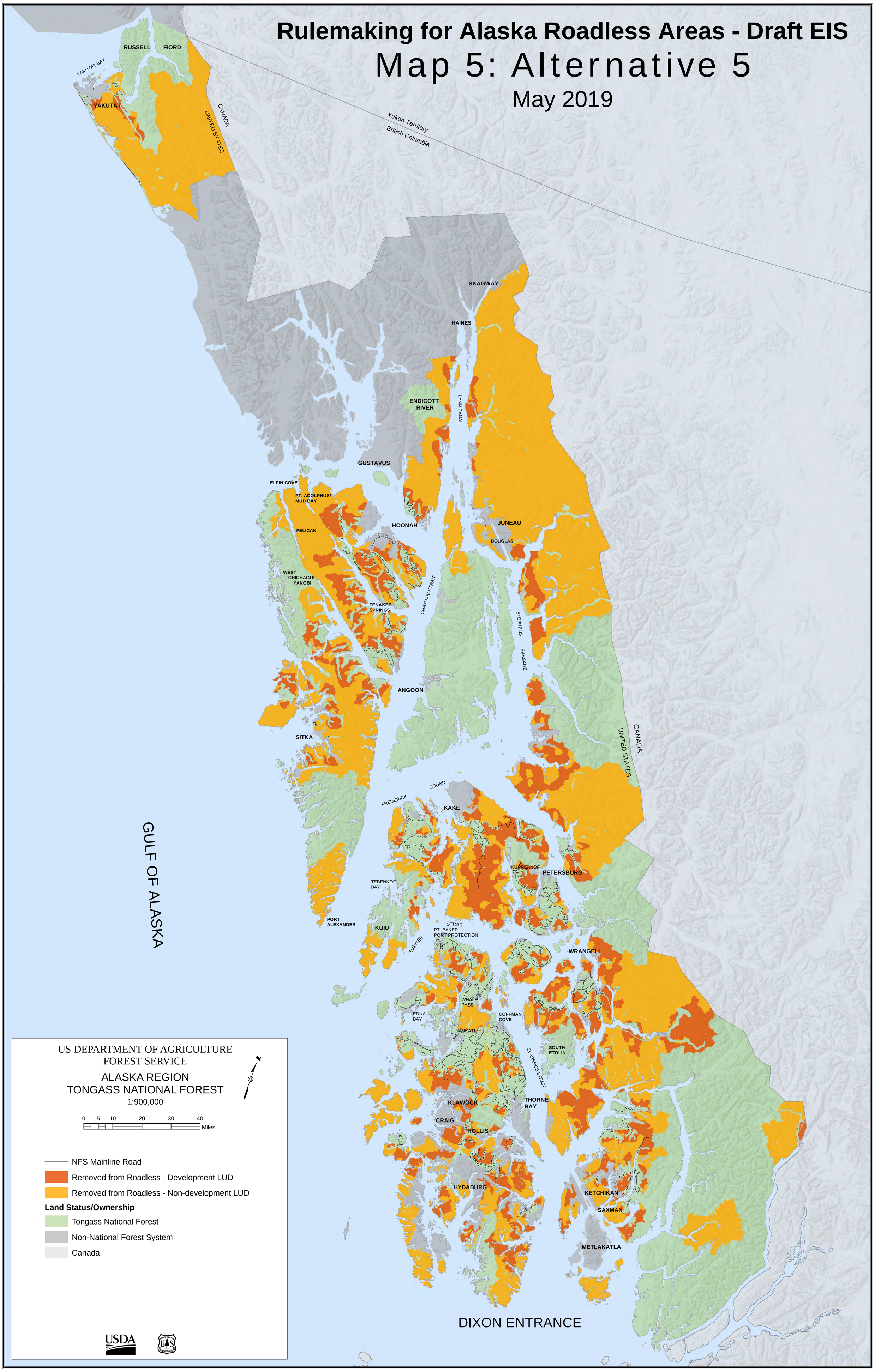

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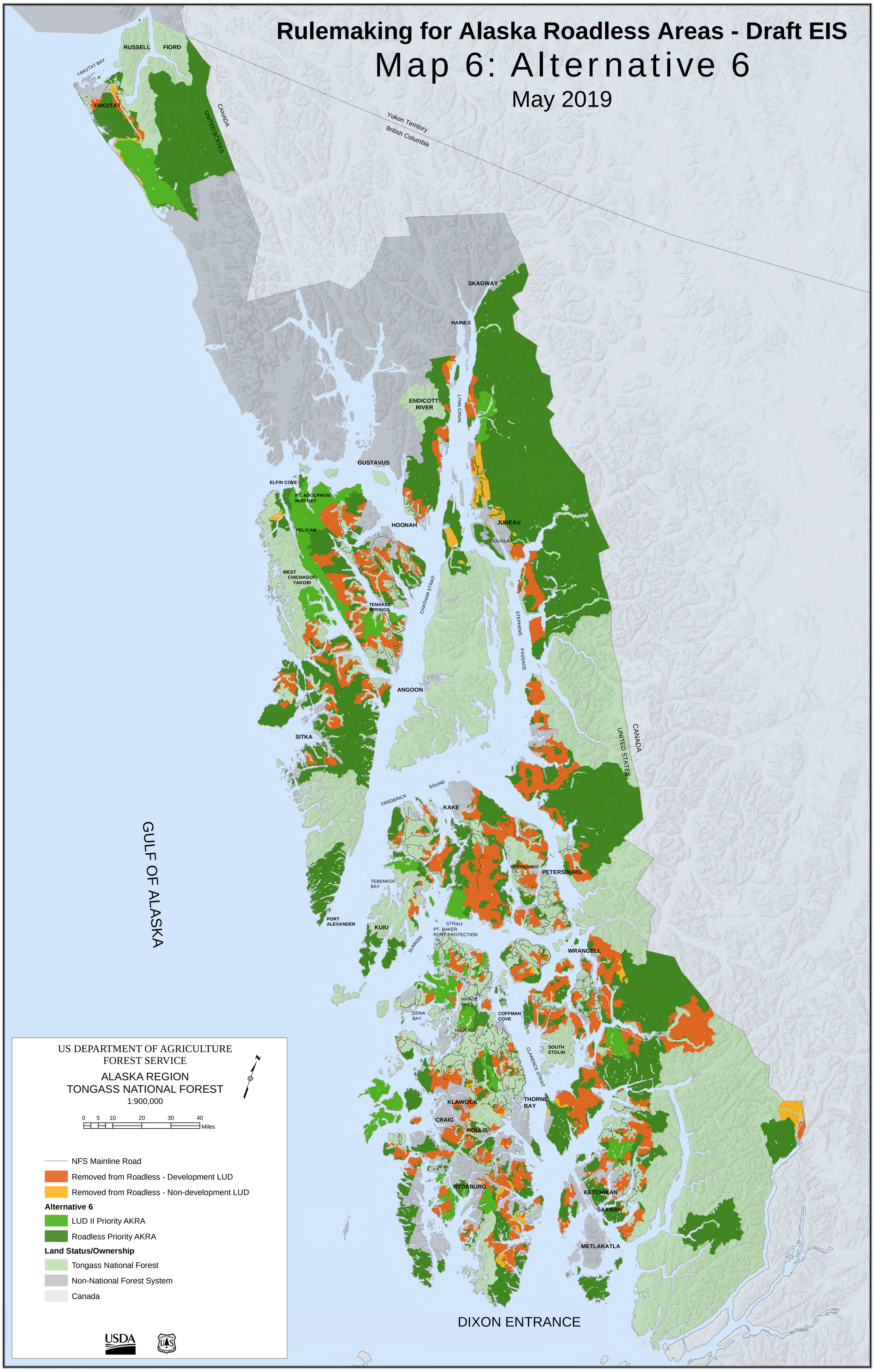
Rulemaking for Alaska Roadless Areas - Draft EIS

Map 6: Alternative 6

May 2019



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