

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**DIVISION OF FORESTRY**



**SOUTHERN SOUTHEAST AREA FORESTRY**  
**PRELIMINARY BEST INTEREST FINDING AND**  
**DECISION FOR**  
**NORTH HOLLIS TIMBER SALE**  
**SSE-1346-K**

**NOVEMBER, 2016**

## Abbreviations

ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
ADF&G	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ADNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
BIF	Best interest finding
DMLW	Division of Mining, Land and Water
DOF	Division of Forestry
FLUP	Forest Land Use Plan
FRPA	Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act
FYSTS	Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales
MBF	Thousand board feet
POG	Productive old growth
POW	Prince of Wales
POWIAP	Prince of Wales Island Area Plan
ROW	Right-of-way
SESF	Southeast State Forest
SESFMP	Southeast State Forest Management Plan
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
UA	University of Alaska
USFS	United States Forest Service

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## **I. PROPOSED ACTION**

The Division of Forestry (DOF) is proposing to offer for sale approximately 230 acres of mature old growth composed of western hemlock, Sitka spruce, western red cedar and yellow cedar from state lands on Prince of Wales (POW) Island, approximately one-mile north of the Hollis Ferry terminal (see Appendix 1A, Timber Sale Area Map). The volume to be offered totals approximately 4,500 thousand board feet (MBF). The DOF proposes to sell the commercial timber in one negotiated sale under provisions of AS 38.05.115, AS 38.05.118 and/or AS 38.05.123. The sale will be noticed as required by sale type authority and AS 38.05.945 prior to being sold.

The management objectives for the proposed timber sales are:

1. To follow the Alaska Department of Natural Resources' (ADNR) constitutional mandate to encourage the development of the State's renewable resources, making them available for maximum use consistent with the public interest;
2. To help the State's economy by providing royalties to the State in the form of Stumpage receipts, an infusion to the State's economy through wages, purchases, jobs, and business; and
3. To help the local economy of the communities within southern Southeast Alaska by creating additional jobs in Southeast Alaska due to the combination of road building, logging, trucking and potentially milling.

## **II. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY**

The Division is taking this action under the authority of

- AS 38.05.035(e) Best Interest Finding;
- AS 38.05.110-120 and 11 AAC 71, Timber Sale Statutes and Regulations; and
- AS 41.17.010-950 and 11 AAC 95 Forest Resources and Practices Statutes and Regulations.

## **III. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD**

The Division will maintain an administrative record regarding the decision of whether or not to proceed with the action as proposed. This record will be maintained at the DOF's Southern Southeast Area Office filed as SSE-1346-K.

## **IV. SCOPE OF DECISION**

This preliminary best interest finding (PBIF) is part three of a six-part process to design, sell, and administer timber sales. This BIF covers the sale of approximately 230 acres of mature old growth forest composed of western hemlock, Sitka spruce, western red cedar and yellow cedar on state land within the perimeter of the 424-acre project area (see Appendix A1, Timber Sale Area Map). The following list summarizes the overall process:

Part 1: Regional Planning. The Department of Natural Resources develops area plans and state forest management plans to designate appropriate uses for state land, classify the land accordingly, and establish management guidelines for multiple use. These plans determine where timber sales are an allowed use, and what other uses must be considered when designing and implementing sales. Sub-

sequent land use decisions must be consistent with the area or forest plans. The area in this BIF is covered by the Subunit 12b- Hollis in the Prince of Wales Island Area Plan (POWIAP).

Part 2: Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales (AS 38.05.113). The Southern Southeast Area Office prepares a Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales (FYSTS) every other year. The Schedule identifies proposed sales, including their location, volume, and main access routes. The Five-year Schedules is a scoping document that provides an opportunity for public, agency, and industry to identify potential issues and areas of interest for further consideration in the Forest Land Use Plan. Under AS 38.05.113, proposed timber sales within the area covered by this BIF must appear in at least one of the two Five-year Schedules preceding the sale. The sale area was within 2013-2017 and 2015-2019 Five Year Schedules of Timber Sales.<sup>1</sup>

Part 3: Best Interest Finding (AS 38.05.035(e)). DOF must adopt a final BIF before selling timber. A best interest finding is the decision document that:

- Ensures that the best interest of the State will be served by this proposed action.
- Establishes the overall area within which the timber sale may occur,
- Determines the amount of timber that will be offered for sale and the duration of the sale,
- Sets the overall harvest and reforestation strategy for the sale area,
- Determines whether the sale proposal complies with the Constitutional requirement to manage for sustained yield by evaluating the amount of timber in the sale and the annual allowable cut for the affected area,
- Selects the appropriate method of sale (i.e., competitive or negotiated sale), and
- Determines the appraisal method that will be used to determine the sale price.

Part 4: Forest Land Use Plans (AS 38.05.112). Prior to authorizing harvest of timber on any area greater than 10 acres, the DOF must adopt a site-specific Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) for the harvest area. DOF will prepare FLUPs for harvest areas within the overall sale area covered by this best interest finding. FLUPs specify the site, size, timing, and harvest methods for harvest units within the sale area. FLUPs also address site-specific requirements for access construction and maintenance, reforestation, and multiple use management. Draft FLUPs will be based on additional field work and site-specific analyses by the DOF. Appropriate regulatory agencies will be consulted and the plan is subject to public review. The timber sale FLUPs will consider the cumulative impacts in the project area as each sale is designed and sold. The DOF estimates that it will notice the FLUP for this area in the winter of 2017.

Part 5: Timber Sales and Contracts. Following adoption of the final BIF, and completion of the FLUPs, DOF offers the timber for sale by either auctioning competitive sales and/or negotiating some sales with purchasers. The Division will sign a contract with the winning bidder for each sale. The contract will include stipulations to ensure compliance with the best interest finding, FLUP, and statutory requirements.

Part 6: Sale Administration. DOF will administer the timber sales and conduct field inspections to ensure compliance with the final BIF, FLUP, timber sale contract, and applicable laws, including the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA) and regulations (AS 41.17 and 11 AAC 95), and forest management statutes and regulations in AS 38.05 and 11 AAC 71.

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<sup>1</sup> The POWIAP (Chapter 2) required noticing harvests in two FYSTS based on the applicable statute at the time. In 2003, the statute was changed to the current standard of at least one FYSTS.

## V. PROJECT LOCATION, LAND STATUS, AND DESCRIPTION

### A. Location

The timber sale area is found within Sections 25, 26 and 35 of Township (T) 73 South(S), Range (R) 84 East (E), Copper River Meridian (CRM). The sale area is found within the Craig C-2 Southwest and Craig B-2 Northwest USGS quadrangles. See attached map titled: Attachment A, SSE-1346 K North Hollis Timber Sale Harvest Area Map.

### B. Title status

The sale area lands were granted to the State through National Forest Community Grants 243, 147, 359, and 360.

### C. Land use planning, classification, and management intent

The total proposed harvest area, 230 acres, is on lands classified as General Use and is within the geographic region covered by the Prince of Wales Island Area Plan (POWIAP). Specifically, the harvest area is within subunit 12b and the management intent and guidelines for this area can be found beginning on page 195 of the area plan. The shoreline of the project area is classified Settlement. The general and specific management intent for the General Use land of this area follows:

#### MANAGEMENT INTENT AND GUIDELINES

State lands will be managed for multiple-use with an emphasis on meeting the needs of a developing community. Some state lands will be managed to provide areas for a community center, where commercial and public services and facilities can be developed. Other state lands that are not located near the community center may be utilized for a variety of purposes, including settlement and community recreation.

#### Forestry

##### Resource Information:

Areas with commercial grade forest are located throughout the subunit. Areas of previous timber harvest occur on the uplands along the Klawock-Hollis Highway as well as near the community center and school in Section 33.

Timber harvests in areas designated "S" (Settlement) are also appropriate if in direct support of subdivision design and development. Timber harvest is not considered appropriate in Settlement areas under other conditions (i.e., occurring well in advance of subdivision activity).

### D. Current access and land use

The main access for this sale area is through Alaska Highway System Klawock-Hollis Highway, Alaska Route 924 and the adjoining subdivision roads Aurora Drive and Nanny Bay Road. The Interagency Ferry System's Hollis terminal is ½ mile southwest of the project area.

The DOF in the summer of 2016 invested approximately \$500,000 into improvements of the Aurora Road. The improvements included widening for two lane traffic, drainage structure upgrades

and subgrade replacement. This work was done to facilitate safe access to the proposed timber harvest area located on general use lands to the north of the subdivision.

Semi-remote residential lots occupy the bordering shoreline. A handful of these lots have observed development and seasonal use within the last five years. It is likely that the area behind the subdivision experiences incidental use by the public for a variety of uses related to semi-remote recreation such as but not limited to berry picking and hunting.

The adjacent public landowners include the Alaska Mental Health Trust and the United States Forest Service both of which have conducted timber harvest operations at various times on their lands since the mid 1940's.

## **E. Background and description of proposal**

### **1. Background:**

The DOF seeks to use General Use land when in alignment with other demands, to encourage sustainable development of the State's forest resources, making timber available for sale and harvest. The demand for State timber is significant at this time due to the uncertainty of the federal timber supply and the diminished activity on Native corporation lands. The majority of the State land base in southeast Alaska is remote.

The North Hollis unit has situational value because it is adjacent to the existing POW road system and offers forest resource values close to the remaining mills and processing facilities and the island's skilled work force.

A diversified economy is important to southeast Alaska. By direction from the Governor and Legislature, the Division of Forestry manages a timber sale program that makes timber volume available to help sustain the region's timber industry and economy.

### **2. Timber Volume and Sustained Yield:**

The total estimated sawlog volume identified in the sale area is 4,500 MBF based on a timber cruise of the units marked in the field using the Atterburry Cruise System.

The Division of Forestry is required to manage its timber harvest on a sustained yield basis. "Sustained Yield" means the "achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of an annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the State land consistent with multiple use" (AS 38.04.910). The Division's policy is to define "regular periodic output" as output over a ten-year period. This is done to allow for market fluctuations and operational restrictions. Based on the DOF inventory of the land and the timber base it uses an annual allowable cut of 11.2 MMBF per year for the Southern Southeast Area. The location of the project and the configuration of the timber units, will allow the DOF to meter the volume offered for sale without exceeding the annual allowable cut. Timber sales that are sold will be within the allowable cut and comply with sustained yield requirements at the time they are sold. The duration of the timber sale contract(s) will be governed by the economic conditions at the time of the sale.

### **3. Harvest Unit Design:**

All harvest sale area units will be designed for clear-cut harvest using conventional shovel logging and high lead cable yarding methods. The specific configuration of harvest types proposed will be defined in the FLUP. Reconnaissance indicates an equal combination of the two types of yarding methods. The Division of Forestry will require full or partial suspension for any cable logging that occurs in the harvest units and ground-based mechanical yarding will be suspended in times of saturated soil conditions.

- a. Reforestation and Site Preparation: The sale area will be reforested in compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices regulations (11 AAC 95.375-.390).

Natural regeneration is the preferred regeneration method for this sale and it is anticipated that adequate stocking levels will be achieved within five years after harvest. Experience with this regeneration method on POW has shown that well-stocked stands are readily established.

Sitka spruce is the preferred species in the projected market conditions. Spruce will likely be the favored and dominant species due to anticipated scarification in the units during harvesting operations. Scarification will disturb the vegetative mat and in turn provide a more receptive seed bed for spruce. Western hemlock and western red cedar will likely be major components of the regenerated stand as well since they are currently on the sites. Alaska yellow cedar is less than four percent of the current stand. It is predicted that it will repopulate in the same general area at a slightly lower rate due to the vigorous growth that is typically exhibited by western red cedar and hemlock when the lower volume sites are disturbed.

The DOF will conduct post-harvest reforestation inspection of the area to ensure the stocking meets FRPA requirements for regeneration.

- b. Road Access - Design and Construction: Road access design, construction, and maintenance will comply with the Forest Resources and Practices regulations (11 AAC 95.285-.355).

No streams containing fish will be crossed by proposed roads within the sale area.

General water quality streams will be crossed by proposed roads within the sale area. To maintain water quality during road construction, the Division of Forestry will implement FRPA's Best Management Practices (BMP).

To keep the potential for soil erosion to a minimum, the amount of road construction has been minimized and the roads are generally not located on steep slopes. The roads are designed to follow the natural contours and benches as much as practical and are generally located on the more moderate slopes. Cable and shovel logging landings will be chosen to manage and minimize the concentration of water and movement of soil. To minimize the potential for erosion, FRPA road construction, maintenance, and slope stability standards will be adhered to at all times and included in timber sale contracts. The DOF timber sale administrator will ensure, with frequent field inspections, compliance with the timber sale contract.

The DOF will consider leaving some of the roads constructed for temporary vehicle access of residual logs for firewood by the public after the harvest operations. This

will be done where doing so will not compromise obligations to keep the road maintained for the preservation of soil and water quality. Spur roads constructed in this sale will generally be closed after harvest of timber to meet FRPA requirements and minimize dumping of garbage and other unauthorized activities. This may be modified in the future as community needs are heard and addressed. Future budget constraints may require a more aggressive road storage or closure plan.

- c. Appraisal Method: The DOF will appraise the timber value in compliance with 11 AAC 71.092.

The sale area will be appraised by using a residual value appraisal method. Selling values and extraction cost numbers are obtained from industry sources, the United States Forest Service, and previous operations.

## **F. Resources and management**

### 1. Timber

- a. Timber Stand Composition and Structure:

The proposed harvest area has the characteristics of mature old growth. The stand is dominated by a red cedar based stand type. The timber identified is a mix of quality. The larger and better quality timber is generally located at the top of the unit. The stand is composed of western red cedar, western hemlock, Sitka spruce and occasional yellow cedar.

- b. Stand Silvics:

Second growth forests adjacent and to the west and south of the proposed harvest area exhibit indications of productive site conditions and are between 15 and 50 years old. The stand to the west was pre-commercially thinned and has responded well. The sites targeted in this BIF generally are residual stands that did not have the species composition for historical market conditions. Some of the bordering areas of the subdivision have evidence of selective harvest mixed with occasional blow down.

The DOF intends to reforest promptly as well as encourage the size of commercial timber species given the objectives of the land management designation on the parcel. The silvicultural prescription that best achieves these objectives is based on past experience and will entail clear-cut harvest. Unit size is primarily a product of topography and forest type, respecting other constraints such as soil stability, high-value fish and wildlife habitat and visual concerns. Natural reforestation will occur and DOF will verify that it meets FRPA standards. It is anticipated that some precommercial thinning will be done on the regenerating stand if the management intent of the parcel remains unchanged to shape the future production of merchantable products (typically sawlogs) when it reaches the stem exclusion stage at approximately 30 years of age.

c. Topography and Soils:

The proposed sale will be designed and managed to prevent significant impairment of the land and water with respect to renewable resources (AS 41.17.060(c)(5)).

The timber sale occupies an area with varied topography ranging from moderate slopes to areas of steep and rocky bluffs; aspect is generally a southeast exposure throughout the sale area. Elevation ranges from 100 to 900 feet within the sale area. The majority of the sale area has slopes of less than 45 percent. Soils characteristics range from well drained glacial coble mix to muskeg soil type.

2. Agriculture.

No agricultural use or grazing is known to occur within the area.

3. Wildlife habitat and harvest.

This sale has been designed using guidelines and management intent from the Prince of Wales Island Area Plan (POWIAP) and the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and Regulations (FRPA). The sale area was not identified as crucial habitat (Ha) or prime habitat (Hb) in the POWIAP.

POW has a total area of approximately 2,577 square miles. The amount of land harvested by the North Hollis timber sale is small in comparison to the size of POW (0.01%). The majority of the land on POW is owned by the USFS with minor amounts in other private and public ownership.

The USFS has reserved productive old growth timber (POG) for non-timber values (such as wildlife) in the 2016 Tongass Land Management Plan. In all plan alternatives, less than a one percent of POG is projected to change in the next 100 years.

No areas of concern were identified by ADF&G in the comments received for the 2013-2017 or 2015-2019 FYSTSs.

ADF&G-DWC area wildlife biologist visited the sale area on October 27, 2016 with DOF staff.

Initial conversations with ADF&G-DWC hypothesized that the site may have some value for winter deer habitat due to the site location relative to the ridge area to the north.

While this may occur it did not appear to hold the amounts of winter forbes and underbrush to make it a high value wintering site. The combined ownership along the base of this ridge likely collectively serves this purpose at various times. The deer activity observed was moderate and was typical for a medium to low volume stand dominated with red cedar. Use patterns observed are generally topography driven as well as associated with timber types that had less cedar content. Stands with significant red cedar generally provided cover but less browse (food) potential. Upon site inspection the ADF&G-DWC voiced no objection of the use of the area for timber harvest.

A reduction in deer habitat in the immediate area will result because of the harvest of this timber. Deer numbers will remain approximately the same as the stand regenerates and but will diminish as the understory is shaded out during mid-term regeneration at approximately 30 years of age. Consequently the act of the harvest of timber will eventually lower the capacity of the immediate area for deer during the period of 30 to 65 years at which point understory will gradually provide more long term food capacity.

The resulting change in availability of deer for wolf predation on POW is minor. The reduction in deer population may be more noticeable for humans as the area regenerates to a second growth forest thus diminishing browse and human access. A relatively large area to the north and west exists for this purpose on USFS land (Karta drainage and the Black Bear area).

Hunting and trapping does occur in the area. It is likely that human interaction with wildlife may occur due to the area's proximity to the community of Hollis and the coastal activity associated with the waterfront based Clark Bay North Subdivision (ASLS 2006-73). The spur roads associated with the timber harvest will provide some additional access for human activities associated with wildlife. Other communities on POW have generally discouraged hunting or shooting on lands bordering residential subdivisions for the safety reasons. Added hunting pressure is not anticipated to be significant due to the proximity of a much larger road network elsewhere on POW and the intent of the DOF to meet the intent of the DMLW area plan and close the spurs if funds are not available for maintenance or there is a risk to the safety of users.

The DOF used available federal information on bald eagle nest locations and field observations during design to ascertain and avoid active nest sites. No nests were observed or documented in the process of designing the timber sale.

The sale is not expected to cause significant adverse impacts overall to the wildlife populations on POW based on the area planning information and the site specific observations of its characteristics.

4. Fish Habitat, Water Resources, and Water Quality. The proposed sale has been designed and managed to protect fish habitat and water quality in compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices Act and regulations (AS 41.17 and 11 AAC 95).

No anadromous or high value resident streams were identified adjacent to or within the sale area during layout of the sale. The topography of the area is generally too steep for fish bearing waters along the hillside with the exception of a few areas in the residential subdivision.

FRPA will be implemented to maintain bank and soil stability and water quality along all streams.

As required by AS 41.17.098, DOF afforded due deference to ADF&G to ensure all fish and wildlife habitat issues are addressed by the proposed timber sale design. DOF provides due deference to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) for all water quality issues. ADF&G-Habitat visited the streams adjacent to the proposed units when the subdivision was planned. ADFG-Habitat declined the invitation to inspect the sale based on topography.

It is standard practice on State timber sales to protect water quality of non-fish bearing water bodies through a combination of retention areas, directional felling, partial suspension of logs, split-yarding, and removal of incidental logging debris (limbs, etc.) from stream channels as required. The varied gradient of the streams of the sale area will aid in the control and settlement of incidental turbidity generated by the operations (e.g., from culvert installation and removal).

Due to the location and design of the units and roads, and the topography around significant surface water bodies, the timber sale is anticipated to avoid significant adverse impacts on water quality.

#### 5. Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources.

Recreation in this part of the southeast Alaska is generally of a dispersed and remote nature. Past timber sales have provided road access for dispersed recreational opportunities and this timber sale will provide similar access. This timber sale is expected to result in no changes to recreational or tourism use of the area.

Road access may provide diversity of hunting access but relative to the overall availability on POW it will be minor. All of the proposed roads are relatively short and dead end within the project area. The upper road located at mid-slope will be water barred at the conclusion of the timber sale in a manner that will limit most highway vehicle use. ATV traffic will not be actively managed. Typically, unless cleared of alder by incidental users the road beds will not be drivable by ATVs inside of fifteen years.

Due to topography and the location of the timber sale it will not be visible to the existing adjacent subdivision. The DOF designed the harvest area to leave an undisturbed forested retention area 100 feet wide along the subdivision. The units will be visible from the Inter Island Ferry as it approaches and departs the terminal to the south. The level of visual change is in keeping with past timber sales harvested in the area and is a smaller footprint than past area harvests around the Maybeso drainage and Sealaska land to the south. The visual footprint from the ferry will match the adjacent forest landscape in approximately 10 years as the stand regenerates.

#### 6. Cultural Resources.

The DOF works with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify and avoid known cultural, historic or prehistoric sites in planning the proposed access routes and harvest areas. The SHPO did not identify any concerns during scoping for the area in recent FYSTS. Opportunity was provided for a site inspection but it was determined not necessary based on earlier inspection of the area associated with DMLW subdivision activity.

If additional archaeological sites are identified, proposed salvage areas and road locations will be appropriately adjusted to avoid conflicts. If any historic or archaeological sites are encountered during road construction or harvest activities, DOF will immediately inform SHPO and take action to protect the findings.

7. Subsurface Resources.

There is no known current mining activity in the immediate area. Other than sharing some of the same access roads, this sale should have no impact on the potential mining resources or mining activity in this area.

8. Residential Subdivision and Access.

The DOF recognized early in the timber sale planning that access to the General Use lands located behind the subdivision would require working with DMLW and local residents regarding the use of the platted ROW referred to as the Aurora Road. The DOF had Aurora Road evaluated for its present and projected use by R&M Engineering-Ketchikan Inc. in 2015. The recommendation was to widen the road for two lane traffic in the area of the developed subdivision. They also recommended upgrading several of the drainage structures due to age and indications that they were not adequately handling flow conditions. The DOF publically noticed intent to make improves to the Aurora Road in support of potential future forest management as well as the shared the preliminary design with the public and residents on December 2, 2015. Based on this information the DOF utilized ADNR Capital Improvement Funds allocated in fiscal year 2013 to perform this work in the summer of 2016 through a public work contract with Ketchikan Ready Mix.

Several lot owners communicated during the project scoping that they would like access to the North Clark Bay Subdivision and encouraged the DOF to look at accessing the timber sale via the subdivision platted ROW located on the landward side of the subdivision. DOF Reconnaissance of the platted ROW (that is an extension of the Nanny Bay Road) measured a sustained adverse grade for the haul of logs in excess of 20 % for 500 feet. This grade is prohibitive to practical and economic hauling conditions of a loaded log truck. The area containing the merchantable timber is generally also located uphill of the ROW and there are also several 40 year old stands of second growth adjacent to the ROW that are better left as is because they are not currently of merchantable size. For these reasons the DOF placed the lower road in the middle of the merchantable band of timber (higher on the hillside) for the western half of the unit. The lower road generally descends the hillside at a grade of 10% and ties to the subdivision ROW on the north side of Section 35. The decision to descend was due to a sizable incised drainage that bisects the timber sale that was economically prohibitive to cross higher on the slope. The lower road then continues along the subdivision ROW for approximately 1,500 feet at which point it climbs away from the subdivision ROW and makes two switchbacks as it climbs back into the timber on the north end of the project. It is likely that the lot owners could utilize portions of the lower forest road to facilitate access at some point in the future. The location of the lower forest road does not physically preclude lot access or make access more expensive.

The best management practices of the FRPA encourage forest operations to develop the least amount of road for accessing timber. The DOF believes that by choosing the proposed location it has meet the intent of FRPA and accommodated likely future use to the extent it coincides with the objectives of the timber sale. The development of the platted ROW is in keeping with the intent of the residential subdivision as well as the General Use land.

In addition to the access to the subdivision, area residences have voiced a desire to access and utilize residual slash for personal firewood after the timber sale. The DOF will work with the land manager (DMLW) during development of the FLUP concerning the appropriate status that the new roads should be left in after the timber sale. The DOF typically closes state forest road upon completion of timber harvesting unless a financial method is identified to maintain the road.

#### **G. Costs and benefits**

Based on the timber cruise of the project area and current markets, timber revenue is projected to cover administration, access and operating costs for this sale area and provide stumpage royalty to the State. Additionally access will be improved to State land and adjacent private residential lots. Timber sales have traditionally created economic benefits to the communities of Southeast Alaska. The business communities will receive direct economic benefits by providing support services for the operators such as fuel, food, housing, medical and miscellaneous supplies. The residents of the communities in Southeast Alaska will receive a direct benefit through employment opportunities and wages paid by the operator during the course of the timber harvest and milling operations.

#### **VI. PUBLIC REVIEW**

The public and agencies are invited to review and comment on this Preliminary Best Interest Finding. Objections or comments pertaining to the proposed action must be received in writing by the DOF Southern Southeast Area Office **by 4:00 pm January 3, 2017** in order to ensure consideration for review. Commenters are encouraged to confirm receipt of their comments by the DOF prior to the submission deadline. Comments should be mailed to the State of Alaska, Division of Forestry, 2417 Tongass Avenue, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901 or emailed to [greg.staunton@alaska.gov](mailto:greg.staunton@alaska.gov). For more information, please contact Greg Staunton at 907-225-3070 or by email at [greg.staunton@alaska.gov](mailto:greg.staunton@alaska.gov). To be eligible to appeal the final decision, a person must have provided written comment on this Preliminary Best Interest Finding by the deadline of: **4:00 pm January 3, 2017**.

#### **VII. PUBLIC NOTICE**

The preliminary best interest finding and decision were publicly noticed in compliance with AS 38.05.945. Notice was posted on the Alaska Online Public Notice System on November 15, 2016. Notices were also posted at the Ketchikan, Craig and Hollis Public Libraries. Mailed notices were distributed to a mailing list maintained by the Southern Southeast Area Office and public notices were sent to the post offices of Ketchikan, Ward Cove, Craig, Klawock, Thorne Bay, Coffman Cove, Naukati, Metlakatla, Wrangell and Petersburg. A legal notice is also provided in the Ketchikan Daily News on November 23 and 30, 2016; the Island Post on December 7 and 21, 2016; the Petersburg Pilot on November 24, 2016 and December 1, 2016 and the Wrangell Sentinel on December 1 and 8, 2016.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION

After due consideration of all pertinent information, the ADNR has reached the following Preliminary Decision: to offer for sale approximately 230 acres of old growth forest composed of western hemlock, Sitka spruce, western red cedar and yellow cedar from State lands on Prince of Wales Island. Harvest activities on the General Use and the ROW in the Settlement lands will follow the management intent of the Prince of Wales Island Plan. The DOF finds that this preliminary decision satisfies the objectives stated in this document and it is in the best interest of the State to proceed with this action under its authority in AS 38.05.035(e) (Powers and Duties of the Director) and AS 38.05.110-120; 11 AAC 71 (Timber Sale Statutes and Regulations; and AS 41.17.010-.950 and 11 AAC 95 (Forest Resources and Practices Statutes and Regulations).

## IX. SIGNATURE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Greg Staunton, Area Forester  
Alaska Division of Forestry

11/15/2016  
Date

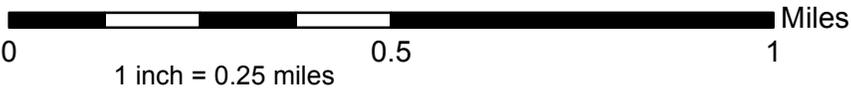
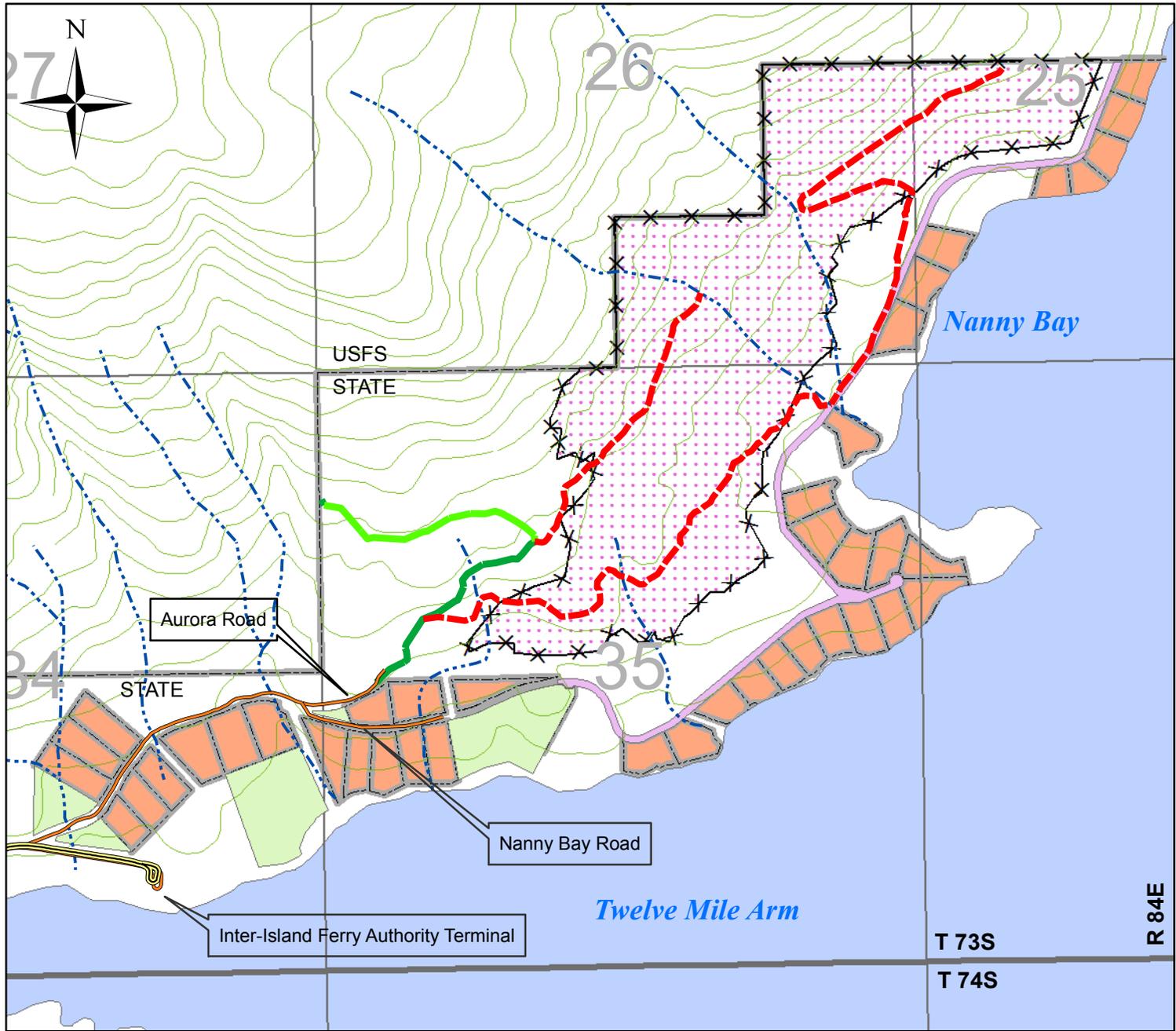
**X. APPENDICES**

**Appendix A** SSE-1346-K North Hollis Timber Sale Area Map

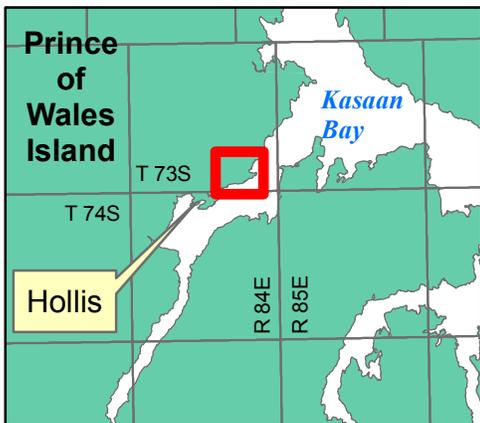
**Appendix B** References

**Appendix C** Reserved for Appeal Regulations

**Appendix D** Reserved for North Hollis Timber Sale Comments & Responses



Contour Interval = 100 feet



Vicinity Map 1 in = 8 miles



# APPENDIX A SSE-1346-K NORTH HOLLIS TIMBER SALE MAP



**DIVISION OF FORESTRY**

Date: 11/16/2016 JLN

## Appendix B References

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**Appendix C Appeal and Request for Reconsideration Regulations**  
(Reserved)

**Appendix D SSE-1346 K North Hollis Timber Sale Comments & Responses**  
(Reserved)