

Your Opportunity to Comment

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments will be accepted for 14 calendar days following publication of legal notice in the *Ketchikan Daily News* newspaper (Ketchikan, Alaska), which is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments to submit them by the close of the comment period.

This project may be completed through a Categorical Exclusion which is not subject to the Pre-Decisional Administrative Review Process (referred to as the "objection process") pursuant to 36 CFR 218. If an Environmental Assessment is completed, objections will only be accepted from those who have submitted written comments specific to the proposed project during scoping or other public involvement opportunity where written comments are requested by the responsible official (36 CFR §218.5). Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object must meet the information requirements in §218.25(a)(3). Names and contact information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). While comments on projects are accepted at any time during the process, the responsible official does not anticipate providing an additional request for written comments other than this scoping period for this project.

Comments should be submitted through the project's comment database at: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public//CommentInput?Project=58424>. Electronic comments should be in a format that is compatible with the current version of MS Word. Specific written comments for the Responsible Official may also be submitted via mail, other delivery service, or fax to Thorne Bay Ranger District, PO Box 19001, Thorne Bay, AK 99919, Fax: 907-828-3309. Hand-delivered comments can also be received at the district office in Thorne Bay (1312 Federal Way), Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., except holidays, subject to applicable COVID restrictions.

For electronically-mailed comments, the sender should normally receive an automated electronic acknowledgement from the agency as confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement of the receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to ensure timely receipt by other means.

For more information about the project, please contact Lucy Aragon, at (907) 828-3250, or email lucy.aragon@usda.gov.

POW 2021 Road Access Project

Proposed Action

The Forest Service is proposing to authorize up to two Standard Form 299 Applications for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Land for National Forest System (NFS) road access, construction, and/or reconstruction on Prince of Wales and Heceta Islands. Two SF-299 Applications for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Land submitted by the State of Alaska are being considered:

The Forest Service proposes to grant access to the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, to use 3,956 feet of NFS 3018050 and authorization to construct approximately 960 feet of new 16-foot wide temporary road and an 86 foot landing extension on NFS land on Prince of Wales Island for a year-round commercial timber haul for up to five years beginning approximately in January 2022.

The Forest Service proposes to authorize the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry to construct about 450 feet of new 16-foot wide temporary road on NFS land to access State land on the east side of Camp Cove, Heceta Island, Alaska for commercial timber haul for up to five years beginning approximately in January 2022.

Authorization will occur through issuing separate special use permits. Both road projects will be decommissioned following the conclusion of commercial hauls, entailing the complete removal of all drainage structures, installing additional water bars as needed, and blocking motor vehicle access.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this proposal is to provide the State of Alaska access to their property as provided for by applicable laws. This action is needed because the State does not currently have economic access to State land adjacent to NFS land, and desires to implement timber sales on State land.

Location

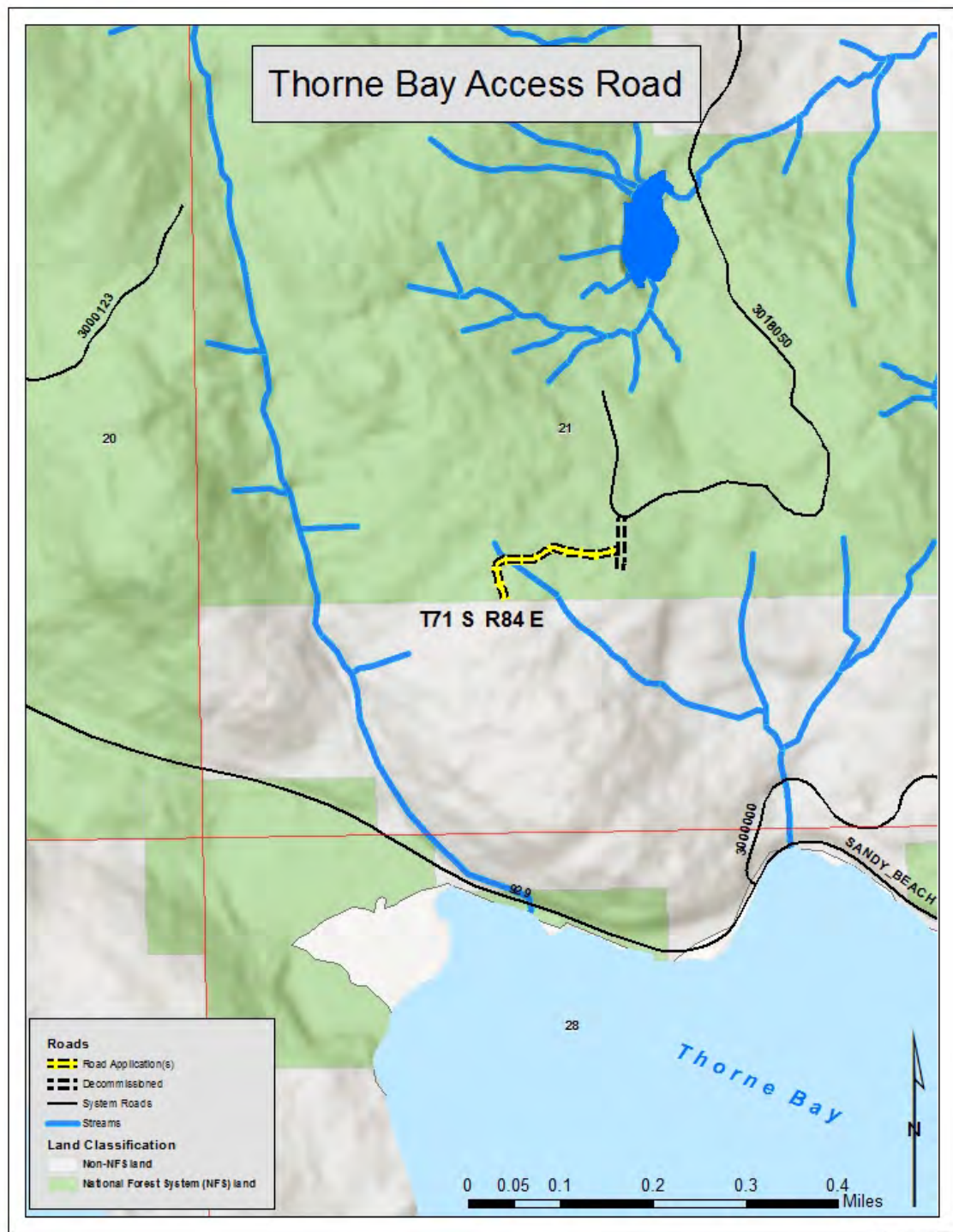
The proposed POW 2021 Road Access Project is located on Prince of Wales and Heceta Islands (Figure 1). The first SF-299 Application includes temporary use access to State land using 3,956 feet of NFS Road 3018050, construction of approximately 960 feet of new 16-foot wide temporary road and the construction of an 86 foot landing extension in the Thorne Bay Watch Subdivision, Thorne Bay, Alaska, on Prince of Wales Island for commercial haul (Figure 2). The second SF-299 Application includes building approximately 450 feet of new 16-foot wide temporary road on NFS land previously harvested in 2015, to access State land on the east side of Camp Cove, Heceta Island, Alaska for commercial haul (Figure 3).

The 2016 Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) includes land use designation (LUD) specific management direction (Chapter 3) and forest-wide direction (Chapters 2, 4, and 5) to manage special uses. The Thorne Bay proposed road location is near the community of Thorne Bay within a Modified Landscape LUD adjacent to State land. The Heceta Island East proposed road is located within a Timber Production LUD on NFS land. Both the Modified Landscape LUD and the Timber Production LUD support development activities including roadbuilding.

The public will not have access to these roads during the life of the timber harvest. The roads will not be part of the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM), and no gates will be required. The road access granted through special permits is temporary and the State will be responsible for all maintenance through the life of the commercial hauls and decommissioning the roads once complete.



Figure 1. General Location Map.



SKM 15 June 2020

Figure 2. Thorne Bay Detail Map.



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Figure 3. Heceta East Detail Map.