



## The United States Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Rule (Roadless Rule):

The intent of the 2001 Roadless Rule is to provide lasting protection for remaining wild and pristine areas within the National Forest System in the context of multiple-use management.<sup>1</sup> A fundamental strength of the Rule is its flexibility for some new road connections between communities, personal-use tree cutting, management of wildfire risks, hard rock mining projects, off-road vehicle use, construction of utility lines and hydropower development.

- Hailed as one of America's most important conservation measures, Roadless Rule protects drinking water, wildlife habitat, and world-class recreation opportunities across 58.5 million acres of national forests.
- *Water.* Roadless forests provide clean drinking water for 48 million Americans.<sup>2</sup> Building roads and commercial logging in these areas threaten our drinking water.
- *Climate.* Roadless forests help slow climate change by protecting some of the most important trees that are storing carbon in their leaves, branches trunks and roots.
- *Recreation.* Some of America's most popular recreation destinations are in Roadless Areas. The Roadless Rule helps fishing, hunting and outdoor recreation thrive in our forests and does not place any limits on recreation.
- *Wildlife.* National forest Roadless Areas in our national forests provide pristine habitat for bears, elk, bighorn sheep, moose, and many other species helping to support a thriving tourism and hunting/fishing industry. Indeed, 2,100 proposed, threatened, endangered, and sensitive species inhabit national forest roadless areas.<sup>3</sup>
- *Fire.* The Roadless Rule allows forest management to reduce wildfire hazards. In fact, no fire mitigation project proposed on lands protected by the Roadless Rule has been denied in places like Utah in recent years. Fires start more often near roads. Therefore, building more roads into forests will lead to more human-caused fires.
- *Taxpayers.* The U.S. Forest Service has an existing backlog of \$3.2 billion in road maintenance. It's nonsensical to add to that backlog and waste taxpayer dollars.
- *Threat.* Allowing road building in these areas opens the door to logging and other industrial development, such as mining, on our favorite public forests. There is no such thing as a temporary road. Once you build a road, it scars the landscape and invites illegal behavior like poaching and trash-dumping.

Learn More at: [SaveOurRoadlessForests.com](https://www.fs.usda.gov/roadmain/roadless/2001roadlessrule)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fs.usda.gov/roadmain/roadless/2001roadlessrule>

<sup>2</sup> Talty, M.J., K. Mott Lacroix, G.H. Aplet, and R.T. Belote. *In revision.* The conservation value of Inventoried Roadless Areas. *Ecosphere.*

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5057895.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5057895.pdf)