



# Legislation safeguards America’s roadless public lands

## Background:

The National Forest Roadless Area Conservation Rule known as the “Roadless Rule,” was adopted in 2001 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which oversees the U.S. Forest Service. The policy was designed to preserve the country’s most wild, forested public lands in the national forest system. The Roadless Rule protects about 58.5 million acres across 39 states. Here are a few roadless area facts:

- Roadless areas contain all or portions of 354 watersheds that provide essential water sources by 60 million people nationwide.
- Some 150 million people visit our national forests and grasslands for outdoor recreation each year. These visitors sustain over 220,000 full and part time jobs, and contribute over \$15 billion to our nation’s economy. Roadless areas serve as a backdrop to such iconic places as the Appalachian, Continental Divide, and Pacific Crest trails.
- The Forest Service oversees an expansive 370,000-mile road system with a backlog of

- uncompleted, unfunded road maintenance work that tallies \$3.2 billion dollars. Given this, it makes no sense to open millions of acres of pristine forest to costly road-building that the American taxpayer would shoulder.
- Roadless portions of national forests serve as critical habitat for hundreds of threatened and endangered species, from grizzly bears and Canada lynx to Pacific salmon and Bull trout. Without such havens, many of these species could be pushed towards extinction.

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