



Idaho's Backcountry Forests Need Your Support

Idaho is blessed with over 9.3 million acres of roadless, backcountry national forest areas. With one of the fastest growing populations in the country, Idaho's rugged, natural areas are becoming more important for preserving opportunities for outdoor recreation, hunting, fishing and our way of life.

In 2001, protections were developed to protect all remaining national forest roadless areas around the country. That rule remains the law of the land. In 2006, then-Idaho Governor Jim Risch petitioned the Forest Service to allow for some development in Idaho's pristine forests.

The Forest Service has developed a draft plan and is considering significantly weakening protections for nearly 6 million acres of Idaho's backcountry, roadless forests, which would result in logging, mining and other damages to some of the last remaining pristine landscapes in the US and the world. These backcountry areas are the source of Idaho's clean water, critical wildlife habitat and offer the opportunity for solitude, a dwindling resource as the northern Rockies region continues to grow. You can learn more at: www.roadless.fs.fed.us/idaho.

The Missoula and Western Montana Connection

Some of the largest and most spectacular roadless areas in Idaho are right over the border. Missoula is at very most a two-hour drive to literally hundreds of thousands of acres of Idaho's roadless areas. Many of us here in western Montana travel to Idaho to recreate specifically in these areas. The Hoodoo/Great Burn area is a great example. It is a large roadless area that straddles the border of Montana and Idaho with the majority of the acreage in Idaho.



Some of the largest and most spectacular roadless areas in the northern Rockies are found in Idaho, such as the Hoodoo/Great Burn roadless area pictured above. Unfortunately, right now the Forest Service is considering significantly weakening protections for nearly 6 million acres of Idaho's roadless forests. Photo by WildWest.

This area is of extreme importance to many western Montanans and contains incredible plant and animal diversity including the recent discovery of Grizzly bears, which had not been sighted there in decades. There are also several other Idaho roadless areas that are right over the border from us here in western Montana including Bighorn-Wietas, Lochsa Face, Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork, and Mallard-Larkins areas. Incredible fishing, birdwatching, hiking, horse packing, and berry picking are just some of the abundant activities one can enjoy in these wonderful areas. **These areas are just as close and important as many of our favorite Montana wildlands and they need your help.**

Speak Out to Protect Idaho's Pristine Forests

Protect the pristine forests you love by submitting comments to the Forest Service, writing a letter to the editor of your local paper and attending a public hearing near you. Now is the time to act! You can learn more about what the Forest Service is proposing at: www.roadless.fs.fed.us/idaho.

What Do I Say in My Written Comments or Letter to Editor?

Use your own words to make your points:

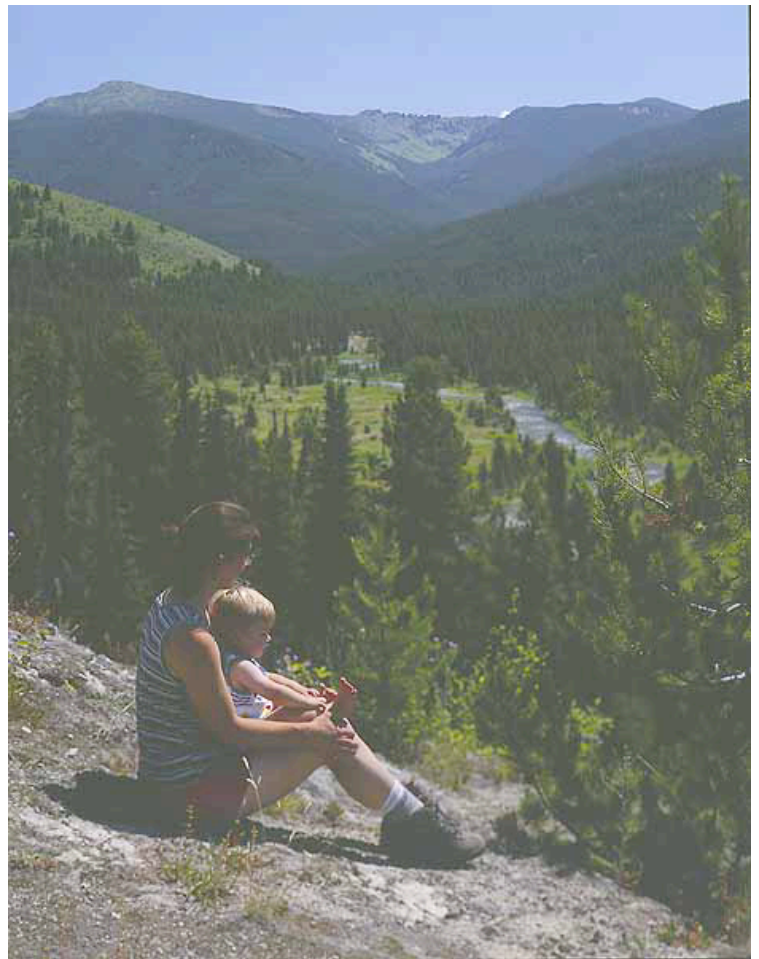
- Weakening protections for Idaho's Roadless areas doesn't make sense, especially as the pressures on these areas continue to mount.
- All of Idaho's roadless areas should be protected from roadbuilding, phosphate mining and commercial logging.
- Existing rules already provide the flexibility to address fire risk to protect our communities.
- Provide specific comments on roadless areas designated as General Forest, where protections would be lifted.

Additional points to make:

- Emphasize the importance of roadless areas for quality recreation, clean water, fish and wildlife habitat
- Relate the importance of roadless areas to the economic future of the region
- Idaho's undeveloped roadless areas provide the best fishing and hunting opportunities and generate millions of dollars per year for Idaho's economy.
- Idaho's forests have an estimated \$660 million backlog of needed maintenance on over 34,000 miles of road.
- Mention personal experiences that you've had in backcountry areas, or issues that you feel are important.
- Review the Draft Rule and request clarification on any questions you might have.

Where Do I Send My Comments?

The Forest Service is accepting comments until April 7, 2008. Send to: Roadless Area Conservation-Idaho, PO Box 162909, Sacramento, CA 95816-2909 or email: IDcomments@fsroadless.org.



A mother and child take in the view overlooking the wild, roadless Kelly Creek drainage on the Clearwater National Forest. Idaho's roadless wildlands are important for clean water, wildlife habitat and a variety of recreational opportunities. Do you part to help the pristine forests you love by submitting comments to the Forest Service today! Photo by Chuck Pezeshki.

To view maps of Idaho's Roadless Areas closest to western Montana, please visit the links below.

Clearwater National Forest
<http://roadless.fs.fed.us/states/id/clea.pdf>

Nez Perce National Forest
<http://roadless.fs.fed.us/states/id/nezp.pdf>

Idaho Panhandle National Forest
<http://roadless.fs.fed.us/states/id/idah.pdf>

Salmon-Challis National Forest
<http://roadless.fs.fed.us/states/id/salm.pdf>

For more information, contact Aaron Kindle at aaroninthewild@yahoo.com or call WildWest at 406.542.7343.