

Forest Service managed roadless areas are at risk – Please take action

What is the Roadless Rule?

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule prevents road building or construction and activities associated with road building in our inventories roadless areas. It also prevents commercial timber sales within these roadless areas. Quality backcountry recreation experiences, healthy fish and wildlife populations, and clean water all depend on unfragmented roadless areas in our national forest lands. Despite this, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is moving to rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and open up 45 million acres of roadless areas across the country to new roadbuilding and logging.

What is the threat?

On June 23, 2025 the USDA [Secretary Brooke L. Rollins announced](#) the intent to rescind the [2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule](#) and on August 27, 2025 USDA kicked off preparation of an environmental impact statement to get rid of the rule. The notice to do this is published in the [Aug. 29, 2025, Federal Register issue](#).

How to Take Action to Defend Roadless Areas

Submit a written **supporting the Roadless Rule by September 19, 2025**. This link takes you right to the comment page for the Roadless Rule <https://www.regulations.gov/commenton/FS-2025-0001-0001>

Unique comments matter – Share personal camping, hiking, fishing, hunting experiences, where possible on why you value protecting our forest service managed roadless areas.

Key Message

“I recreate in Nevada’s roadless areas and I support maintaining the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule and swift passage of the Roadless Area Conservation Act. Rescinding the Rule would fragment habitat, increase wildfire risk, and threaten clean water supplies. Instead of dismantling a proven policy, USDA should work with stakeholders to refine and strengthen the Rule to adapt to changing fire regimes and local needs while continuing to conserve backcountry recreation opportunities.”

What does this mean for Nevada?

Since 2001, the Roadless Area Conservation Rule has conserved some of our nation's most wild and intact national forest lands. In Nevada there are 5,833,000 acres of Forest Service managed lands and of that **3,186,000 acres are** Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Virtually all our cherished Forest Service Wilderness areas were inventoried roadless areas at one point. Places like the Ruby Mountains, Mount Rose, Table Mountain, Mt. Moriah, the High Schells, were all roadless areas than became Wilderness Areas through acts of Congress. There are still many Forest Service managed roadless areas that deserve long term protection. Since the Roadless Rule went into effect in 2001, eight of those roadless areas became new or expanded wilderness areas totaling 282,318 acres. And many more of the remaining roadless areas are high value wilderness quality areas that we are actively working to protect as Wilderness.

What would happen to Roadless Areas in Nevada if the Roadless Rule were rescinded?

Nevada’s inventoried roadless areas (IRAs) would remain as roadless areas but the protections afforded to them would be lessened.

- **Road Construction and Reconstruction would be allowed in most Nevada Roadless Areas.** Prior to the roadless rule taking place in March of 2001, 3,166,000 acres of Nevada’s IRAs were open to road building and would be again.
- **Oil and Gas Leasing and other mineral leasing would be allowed in Roadless Areas** unless there were specific restrictions in the Forest Plan (1986). With the push for oil and gas leasing, we can expect more leasing in these areas.
 - The July 4th Budget Bill placed new restrictions on the BLM and FS regarding leasing on Forest Service lands. Since the 1987 Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act, the USFS can object to the

issuance of leases and must consent to leasing on Forest Service lands. The bill, however, limits the environmental restrictions and stipulations that the Forest Service can apply by limiting them to what is already included in a land management plan.

- The Budget Bil also mandated a minimum of four lease sales per year in Nevada and requires the BLM to offer for lease at least 50% of nominated available parcels. It lowered the royalty rates to 12.5% and reinstated noncompetitive leasing.
- **Timber Production.** While Nevada is not a timber producing state generally, timber production could occur in roadless areas especially on the Carson and Bridgeport Districts in large part because of the proximity to an operating sawmill.
 - In 2023, Tahoe Forest Products opened a sawmill on 37.2 acres of land leased from the Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada just south of Carson City. It is the first new industrial-scale sawmill in the Sierra Nevada to be constructed in several decades.
 - Additional pressure to open up more timber production come from the March 2025 Presidential Order, *“Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production”*.
 - An April 2025 memo to all Regional Foresters to “I am directing all Regional Foresters to develop 5-year strategies, tiered to the national strategy, to increase their timber volume offered, leading to an **agencywide increase of 25%** over the next 4-5 years.
 - On July 4, 2025, the OBBB **requires** the U.S. Forest Service to increase its timber targets by 250 million board feet annually from 2026 through 2034. This mandate significantly increases industrial logging on federal public lands managed by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

Collectively with the push by this administration to increase production of energy, timber and other commercial uses more pressure will be put on our Forest Service public lands resulting in increased fragmentation of wildlife habitat, loss of wild places, more roads, more invasive weeds, etc.

What Can Occur in Roadless Areas

Roadless Areas are open for many multiple uses including:

- Back country recreation including backpacking, horse packing and riding, camping, fishing and hunting
- Roads needed to protect public health and safety in cases of flood, fires or other catastrophic events
- Hazardous fuels reduction
- Habitat improvement projects
- Use on Off-highway Vehicle trails
- Grazing under existing permits
- Firewood gathering and berry/mushroom collection
- Access to pre-existing oil and gas leases.
- Transmission lines are also permitted in special cases
- Mineral exploration is still allowed under the General Mining Law of 1872.

What Else can Be Done?

Support the **Roadless Area Conservation Act** [Roadless Area Conservation Act](#)

This bill was introduced into Congress on June 11, 2025 by Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), along with Representatives Yassamin Ansari (AZ-03) and Andrea Salinas (OR-06) and many other members of Congress from both chambers, announced a renewed push to enshrine the U.S. Forest Service’s Roadless Rule protections into law.

Contact Members of Congress: Call the Capitol Switchboard at **202-224-3121** and urge your representatives to support for the Roadless Area Conservation Act.