

March 16, 2006

Dale Bosworth
Chief, US Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-0003

Dear Chief Bosworth,

We are writing to you concerning the future of Washington State's last wild forests and the benefits these last roadless forests provide to the citizens of Washington State as well as the benefits they provide to all Americans who share ownership of these national treasures.

The federal roadless areas of Washington State provide our citizens with rich scenic and recreational opportunities and serve as an essential part of the economic foundation of our state. The citizens of Washington State have already voiced strong support for national protection for these wild places, submitting more than 140,000 comments in support of their protection.

On February 9, 2006, the Governor of Washington joined California, Oregon and New Mexico in challenging the legality of the repeal of the enormously popular 2001 Roadless Rule. Maine and Montana have supported the states' lawsuit as friends of the court, and 20 conservation organizations have filed their own challenge to the repeal. On February 28, 2006, over a quarter of a million Americans petitioned the Department of Agriculture pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act to reinstate the 2001 rule.

In light of the legal cloud surrounding the new rule and consistent with the administration's stated intent to "cooperatively conserve inventoried roadless areas within our national forests" and provide "interim protection to roadless areas, pending the development of state specific rules," we ask that the Forest Service agree to not propose projects in inventoried roadless areas that might disqualify areas or portions of areas from protection, or degrade their special roadless qualities. We further request that the Forest Service halt and withdraw all such projects under development (see attachment) as long as the disposition of these areas remains unresolved.

Due to the overwhelming public support for the protection of roadless areas, decisions regarding the management of these lands must be afforded significant consideration and weight. Moreover, decisions to take actions which may disqualify areas or portions of areas from protection, or degrade their roadless qualities and values, should not be made until the legality of the new rule has been resolved.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,
Michelle Ackermann
NW Regional Director
The Wilderness Society

Nalani Askov

Executive Director
Washington Wilderness Coalition

Bonnie Phillips
Executive Director

Olympic Forest Coalition

Jeff Lambert
Wilderness Liaison
Spokane Mountaineers

Donna Osseward
President
Olympic Park Associates

Mitch Friedman
Executive Director
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Kathy Johnson
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Megan Blanck-Weiss
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James T. Burke
President
Mountaineers

Mike Petersen
Executive Director
The Lands Council

John Boonstra

Executive Minister
Washington Association of Churches

Jonathan Guzzo
Director of Advocacy
Washington Trails Association

Marc Bardsley
President
North Cascades Conservation Council

Kendra Donelson
President
Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society

Emily Platt
Executive Director
Gifford Pinchot Task Force

Pat Rasmussen
Executive Director
Leavenworth Audubon Adopt-a-Forest

Jon Soest
Conservation Chair
North Central Washington Audubon Society

Adair Dammann
NW/Alaska Regional Director
Sierra Club

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Enclosed: Project List