



Dear Roadless Area Supporter,

U.S. Forest Service Roadless Area management policies are currently under review in Colorado to determine how Roadless Areas will be managed in the future. Public hearings and commentary are being taken by the State of Colorado's Roadless Area Review Task Force. The Task Force will hold a public meeting in Glenwood Springs on June 21 to gather comments and discussion regarding the White River National Forest, the most heavily used national forest in the United States by both motorized and non-motorized recreationists. Currently, multiple-types of recreation are allowed in Roadless Areas, including horse travel, foot travel, bicycling, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, motorcycling, ATV travel, and snowmobiling. The Task Force will then synthesize comments gathered state-wide and make recommendations in September to Governor Owens, who will then petition the Secretary of Agriculture for a determination about Colorado's Roadless Areas.

A group of citizens living near the White River National Forest has formed the Citizens for Roadless Area Defense (C-RAD). The mission of C-RAD is: To gain public support for preserving the unique qualities of the Roadless Areas within the White River National Forest, we seek to protect the recreational, economic, and ecological values of our nation's most visited National Forest by keeping Roadless Areas *as they are* - roadless!

This packet contains the following information to help inform you and help you take action to protect Roadless Areas:

- Values of Roadless Areas in the White River National Forest
- Frequently Asked Questions and Answers about Roadless Areas
- Ways to Take Action to support Roadless Areas
- Tips for Submitting Comments to the Roadless Area Review Task Force

Please look over this information and help keep the Roadless Areas in the White River National Forest roadless!

Thank you!

Citizens for Roadless Area Defense (C-RAD)

www.wrroadless.org



THE MANY VALUES OF ROADLESS AREAS IN THE WHITE RIVER NATIONAL FOREST

Economic and Recreational Values

- Colorado's National Forest land contains 4.4 million acres of inventoried roadless lands, with over 640,000 acres located in the White River National Forest.
- The White River National Forest is the most visited National Forest in the entire nation, with 9,692,000 user days in 2002.
- Tourism in Colorado generates more than \$7 billion annually, contributing more than a half a billion dollars to Colorado's state and local tax coffers.¹
- In Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin and Summit Counties (the major counties comprising the White River National Forest), 67% of the population is dependent on the tourism industry for its livelihood. Many of the tourists come to these counties to visit the White River National Forest.²
- Outdoor gear and equipment sales in Colorado totaled \$1.3 billion in 2003.³
- Hunting and fishing generated \$1.5 billion in 2002 to Colorado's economy, and wildlife viewing added another \$560 million. Many of these wildlife species depend on Roadless Areas for essential habitat.⁴
- In Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin and Summit counties, the total economic input from hunting, fishing and wildlife watching is about \$265 million. Ninety-eight percent of this is generated within the White River National Forest.⁵
- Roadless Areas in the White River National Forest provide outstanding recreational opportunities, including hiking, backpacking, hunting, fishing, wildlife-watching, and skiing – activities that are undertaken regularly by over 66% of Coloradans, and are essential for the \$18 billion dollar national outdoor recreation industry.⁶
- The Forest Service's own studies show that the economic benefit of extractive uses are only a fraction of the economic benefit derived from recreation and conservation activities. Specifically, conservation and recreation activities generate about 3 times the revenue and 5 times the number of jobs than extractive industries on Forest Service land.⁷

¹ Colorado Tourism Office

² An analysis of Economic Trends in the WRNF Region, US Forest Service, 1997

³ Outdoor Industry Association, 2004

⁴ Colorado Department of Natural Resources. http://wildlife.state.co.us/about/economic_impact/

⁵ Colorado Division of Wildlife, 2004

⁶ Outdoor Industry Association, 2003

⁷ Alward, G. et al., 2003. *Evaluating the economic significance of the USDA Forest Service strategic plan* (2000 revision): Methods and results for programmatic evaluations. Fort Collins, CO: USDA Forest Service Inventory and Monitoring Report No. 6. 45 p.

- The White River National Forest currently contains 2,356 miles of forest-managed roads that provide access to and through WRNF system lands.⁸ Nationally, the US Forest Service road system contains 386,000 miles of roads – enough to circle the earth 15 times.
- The US Forest Service has a fiscal backlog of \$10 billion for maintenance of existing roads. The Forest Service receives less than 20% of the funding needed to maintain its existing road infrastructure.⁹

Ecological Values

- Roadless Areas in the White River National Forest provide vital habitat and migration routes for numerous wildlife species and are particularly important for those requiring large home ranges.
- In February 2006, the Colorado Division of Wildlife staff presented a statewide report compiled by area managers and field biologists from around Colorado, with 100% of those staff members recommending that ALL Roadless Areas be protected, preserved, enhanced, managed and maintained to provide the maximum benefit for wildlife and wildlife habitat.¹⁰
- White River National Forest Roadless Areas act as ecological anchors, especially in areas where nearby federal, state, and private lands are being developed.
- Development in Roadless Areas can allow entry of invasive plants and animals that threaten the health of native species, increase human-caused wildfire, and disrupt habitat connectivity.¹¹
- Continued entry into Roadless Areas will decrease the amount of wildlife habitat available by increasing fragmentation.
- The best coldwater fish habitat is in Roadless Areas. Sedimentation and debris from road-building can irreversibly degrade habitat for fish and other aquatic organisms.¹²
- Roadless Areas serve as buffer zones that help prevent wildfires. Forest Service studies have found that large fires occur much more frequently in areas that are already roaded than in Roadless Areas. Human-caused wildland fire is nearly five times more likely to occur on essentially roaded lands than on essentially unroaded lands. According to a 15-year study by independent scientists, large wildfires are more likely to occur and to burn to greater extents in areas outside of Roadless Areas.¹³
- Forests can recycle from 1,760 to 3,903 pounds of carbon dioxide per acre per year, helping offset the average US per capita carbon dioxide contribution of 5.6 tons per year.
- The Forest Service received more than 4 million comments on the original Roadless Area Conservation Rule, the vast majority of them in favor of strong protection for Roadless Areas in our national forests.

⁸ Page 3-382 WRNF LRMP FEIS

⁹ Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation FEIS at p 1-5

¹⁰ Inventoried Roadless Areas Report, Colorado Division of Wildlife, available at www.wildlife.state.co.us

¹¹ Forest Service NOI, Federal Register: October 19, 1999 (Volume 64, Number 201)]

¹² American Fisheries Society, November 2005

¹³ Natural Resources Defense Council, 12/15/04. www.nrdc.org



ROADLESS AREA FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a road?

The U.S. Forest Service defines a road as a vehicle route that is more than 50 inches wide, constructed and maintained on Forest Service land for full-sized vehicle use. In order for a route in a National Forest to be considered a road it must be recognized by the Forest Service in their designated road system. There are 2,356 miles of roads recognized by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in the White River National Forest (WRNF). Nationally, the USFS is responsible for the largest road network on Earth – 365,000 miles – but USFS can maintain only 20% of that inventory to appropriate standards, leaving a whopping \$10 billion maintenance backlog for future generations to address.

What is a Roadless Area?

Roadless Areas are undeveloped areas in National Forests, which are without authorized Forest Service roads. Roadless Areas generally exceed 5,000 acres in size; however, if an area is without roads and less than 5,000 acres, it may be classified as a Roadless Area if it meets the following criteria:

- Manageable in a natural condition,
- A self-contained ecosystem, such as an island,
- Contiguous to existing or proposed Wilderness areas, primitive areas, or Roadless Areas in other Federal ownership, regardless of their size.

Certain Roadless Areas may have unauthorized, user-created “routes” within their boundaries, but this does not preclude them from qualifying for roadless status.

The Forest Service has officially inventoried 84 Roadless Areas in the WRNF, which collectively cover 640,000 acres. Citizen groups have also inventoried additional lands that meet the USFS’s own roadless-area criteria, for a total of more than 1.1 million acres.

Why is Colorado considering developing roads in Roadless Areas?

The Roadless Area Conservation Rule was instituted in 2001, affording nationwide protection for US Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas. This rule essentially prohibited construction of new roads on 58.5 million roadless acres across the nation, including 4.4 million acres in Colorado. When the Bush administration took office, the “Roadless Rule” was repealed, leaving Roadless Areas under new threat of development. Last year, the Bush Administration initiated a state-by-state Roadless Area Review Process, whereby each state is tasked with reviewing its Roadless Areas and petitioning the administration regarding whether or not these areas should be managed as roadless.

What is the Roadless Task Force?

The state of Colorado has created a Roadless Area Review Task Force to recommend how Colorado’s Roadless Areas should be managed in the future. The Task Force was assembled in 2005, comprised of 13 representatives from a wide array of interest groups. The Task Force is in the midst of holding public hearings for each of the National Forests in the state, taking public input about whether the Roadless Areas in each forest should remain roadless or be allowed to have roads constructed into them. The Task Force will hold a public meeting in Glenwood Springs on June 21 to gather comments and discussion regarding the WRNF – location to be determined.

What uses are currently permitted in Roadless Areas?

Current permitted uses in Roadless Areas include:

- Hunting
- Fishing
- Hiking
- Backpacking/camping
- Horseback riding
- Outfitting
- Grazing
- Snowshoeing
- Cross-country/backcountry skiing
- Motorized trail vehicle travel (dirt bike, ATVs, snowmobiles)
- Mountain Biking
- Wildlife watching
- Management activities addressing forest health and wildfire concerns

What are the effects of road-building on undeveloped National Forest lands?

Road construction can increase the risk of erosion, landslides, and slope failure, endangering the health of watersheds that provide drinking water to local communities and critical habitat for fish and wildlife. Road construction allows entry of invasive plants and animals that can threaten the health of native species, increase human-caused wildfire, and disrupt sensitive wildlife habitat.

An extensive Roadless Area network on the western side of the White River National Forest is now being heavily targeted for oil and gas development, as the industry is now pursuing development in areas that were once considered economically unviable. According to the WRNF supervisor, “we are experiencing intensified energy exploration on the White River National Forest, a forest that has historically managed this use on a very small scale.” Oil and gas development customarily requires an extensive network of roads, pipelines and well pads that destroys Roadless Area values.

How do I write a letter to the Task Force?

You can mail your letter to the Task Force to:

The Keystone Center
ATTN: Roadless Areas Review
1628 Sts. John Road
Keystone, CO 80435

Or you can submit your comments online via the website:

www.keystone.org/html/roadless_areas_task_force.html

Please see the “Tips for Submitting Comments” sheet for more details.

****Please note that the Keystone Center is a neutral party collecting all comments to the Task Force.****

How can I join the Roadless Campaign?

For more information or to join C-RAD, please go to www.wrroadless.org or contact Leslie Cook at (970) 948-7221 or lesliecook@excite.com.



TAKING ACTION!

Thank you for choosing to take action to protect Roadless Areas in the White River National Forest! There are a number of things that you can do to show your support of Roadless Areas.

At the direction of the Colorado State Legislature, a statewide Task Force has been formed to take public comment and make recommendations on how National Forest Roadless Areas should be managed. You can influence the decisions of the Task Force by doing the following:

1. Write a letter to the Roadless Areas Review Task Force:

Letters are the most powerful way to get your comments read and recorded by the Task Force. The Task Force is asking citizens to provide information about specific Roadless Areas that they think should be protected, as well as general values of Roadless Areas in the WRNF.

Please see the “Tips for Writing a Letter” sheet for all the information you need to write to the Task Force.

2. Attend the Roadless Areas Review Task Force Meeting on June 21st :

If you would like to speak at this meeting, there is a public comment period that you can sign up for before the meeting. Or, just come to show your support for keeping Roadless Areas in the White River National Forest as they are – roadless! There is a huge power in numbers, so let’s pack the house...

More information about this meeting will be posted at www.wrroadless.org closer to the date.

3. Adopt a Roadless Area:

The Task Force has made it clear that letters from individuals advocating the values of specific roadless areas will have the most influence as Task Force members make their decisions about the management of these places. So it is up to us to get out to these places, document their values, and provide substantive input to the task force about why they should be protected.

If you are interested in “adopting” one of the Roadless Areas in the White River, which involves taking a trip to the area and documenting its values, please email Jim Campbell and Sandy Jackson, adoption coordinators, at sandyj@rof.net.

4. Send a letter to the editor of your local newspaper:

Letters to the editor are a great way of alerting other citizens about what is going on, and educating the public on the importance of protecting Roadless Areas. You can use excerpts from your letter to the Task Force, or include new ideas.

5. Invite your friends to come to the Task Force meeting, write a comment letter to the Task Force, or adopt a Roadless Area:

The more people we have helping in this campaign, the more impact we will have on the decisions that are being made. Please ask your friends to get involved!

For more information, visit www.wrroadless.org or contact Leslie Cook at (970) 948-7221 or lesliecook@excite.com.



INFORMATION FOR SUBMITTING ROADLESS COMMENTS

Thank you for taking the time to submit your comments to the Task Force – this is an important step for protection of the White River National Forest’s remaining Roadless Areas. Below are some suggestions for sending in your comments:

- Printed letters are far more effective than emails, so if you can take the time to write a letter on your computer or by hand, this goes a long way. But if you only have time for email, that works too!
- Don’t forget to include your name and address in the beginning of the letter, and why you chose to live in the area and/or how often you visit the White River National Forest. Also talk about the activities that you enjoy most in the forest.
- Personal stories work the best! If you have had experiences in specific Roadless Areas in the White River National Forest, take a minute to write about those experiences, and why you think it’s important to keep those particular areas roadless!
- Also, talk about some of the general values of Roadless Areas in the White River National Forest – use the “Many Values of Roadless Areas” to help you with ideas.
- Please be clear in telling the task force that in addition to specific Roadless Areas you are defending, you would like to see all White River Roadless Areas protected, so that there is no confusion! Something like: “I ask the task force to recommend that Governor Owens fully protect all of the White River National Forest’s Roadless Areas.” Also, ask for protection for *all of Colorado’s* Roadless Areas if you can.
- The official Forest Service inventory of roadless acreage on the WRNF is about half a million acres short of what citizen volunteers have inventoried. You are encouraged to urge the task force to also consider protecting those lands that citizens’ inventories have shown to be roadless.
- Don’t forget to sign the letter, and also make sure your full address is on the letter at least once.
- Please get your letter into the Task Force on or before June 21st, the date of the public hearing on the White River National Forest.
- Send written comments to the following address:

**The Keystone Center
ATTN: Roadless Areas Review
1628 Sts. John Road
Keystone, CO 80435**

****Please note that the Keystone Center is a neutral party collecting all comments to the Task Force.****

- Please send a copy of your letter to C-RAD to keep on record. You can mail the letter to: C-RAD, PO Box 1257, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602. Or email the letter to drjim@rof.net.

Thank you so much for helping to protect our Roadless Areas!!
For more information, please go to www.wrroadless.org.