

Roadless Area Logging in the White Mountain National Forest



South Carr Mountain Inventoried Roadless Area, White Mountain National Forest, New Hampshire.
Stand 39/11, before and after logging on the Batchelder Brook Timber Sale, 2008.

When the U.S. Forest Service adopted the landmark Roadless Area Conservation Rule in 2001, it was the result of the most extensive and popular rulemaking in the history of our federal government. Over 1 million Americans commented on the rule; more than 95 percent supported the conservation measures it established.

The “Roadless Rule” is intended to protect the last 58 million acres of roadless land in the national forest system by placing carefully considered limits on road construction, mining, logging, and other forms of extractive development that harm forests and wildlife.

For eight years, the Bush administration assailed the Roadless Rule. Emboldened by the anti-environment mood in Washington, some national forests ignored the Rule, its broad support, and its scientific underpinnings. On one national forest in particular—the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire—the results have been devastating.

These images depict how the Forest Service manages our national forest roadless areas in the absence of clear, strong, consistent, and enforced protective policies. These images foreshadow a possible future for other roadless areas that we hope will never be realized. It is time for change. It is time to ensure the lasting protection of all national forest roadless areas as part of our rich natural heritage, and for the benefit of generations to come.

What’s at Stake?

More than 58 million acres of inventoried roadless areas on our country’s national forests; the survival of many rare and endangered plants and animals; ecosystem health; invaluable ecological services to human communities, such as clean water and air, flood control, robust fisheries; and buffers against the impacts of climate change.

What’s the Threat?

The fragmentation and destruction of roadless areas by the Forest Service through road construction, clearcutting, and other forms of logging. The many harms that accompany roads and logging, including siltation of streams, degradation of soils, invasion of exotic species, loss of habitat diversity, more noise and disturbance.

What’s Happened on the White Mountain National Forest?

The Forest Service has claimed that certain inventoried roadless areas are not protected by the “Roadless Rule.” No other Forest has yet invaded an Inventoried Roadless Area on the basis of this argument. However, on the White Mountain National Forest, agency officials have already overseen logging in two separate roadless areas: Wild River Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) and South Carr Mountain IRA. Two more roadless area logging projects, in Kilkenny IRA and Sandwich 4 IRA, have been approved. The agency has signaled its intent to include

roadless areas in virtually all future timber sales. Video footage of clearcutting in White Mountain National Forest can be viewed [here](#).

What Does This Mean Nationally?

The Forest Service has attempted to differentiate roadless areas on the White Mountain National Forest from other national forest roadless areas. It claims that the Forest planning process created a new baseline and a new type of roadless area that is not afforded the protections of the Roadless Rule. If this rationalization is allowed to stand, any national forest embarking on forest-wide planning will feel empowered to target certain roadless areas for road-building, logging, and other intrusive activities. This will be the death-knell of the principles and intent of the Roadless Rule.

What's Needed?

Immediate, strong, and nationally consistent protections for all national forest roadless areas. The choice for our national forest roadless areas is clearcut, or clearly protect. Which will we choose?



Wild River Inventoried Roadless Area, White Mountain National Forest, Unit 15, before and after logging on the Than Brook Timber Sale, 2008.

A Public Mandate for Roadless Area Protection on the White Mountain National Forest

The Forest Service and timber industry advocates constantly assert that a majority of citizens approve logging and road construction in roadless areas on the White Mountain National Forest. The Forest Service's own data show that this is simply not true. Of comments received by the agency on the 2005 Forest Plan, the most frequently mentioned issue (44%) was roadless area protection. More than 90% of these comments favored protection.

During the development of the Roadless Rule, over 8,000 residents of New Hampshire submitted comments to the agency, and 93% asked for the complete protection of all roadless areas. When the Bush administration proposed rolling back the rule, nearly 7,000 residents of New Hampshire commented, with over 95% of them opposing removing protection for these areas. The public consensus is for roadless area protection, not roadless area logging.

Please help us gain the permanent protection of national forest roadless areas in New Hampshire and nationwide. Get informed, and get involved. Thank you.



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