



Citizens for Roadless Area Defense (C-RAD)

Working to keep the White River National Forest's Roadless Areas as they are – roadless!

Dear Business Leader,

The 2.3-million-acre **White River National Forest** is one of the main economic engines of our regional economy. The nation's most visited National Forest, it sustains our **recreation, tourism, real estate and other industries**, and is largely responsible for the **high quality of life** we all enjoy.

A big part of what makes the White River NF so special is now under threat. Under a new federal rule, states must petition Washington to reinstate protections for **Roadless Areas** on National Forests. And we citizens must actively urge them to do so – or allow our last Roadless Areas to be **potentially opened up to drilling, logging, mining and other unsustainable development**.

In Colorado, a **Roadless Areas Review Task Force** is currently taking **public comments** on whether or not to reinstate these roadless protections, and it will hold a **public hearing in Glenwood Springs** on June 21 specifically about Roadless Areas on the White River National Forest.

Citizens for Roadless Area Defense (C-RAD) is a grassroots campaign whose mission is to protect the recreational, economic, and ecological values of the White River National Forest by **keeping its Roadless Areas as they are – roadless**.

We need the help of the business community. In the final analysis, economic arguments will probably have the greatest influence on the Task Force.

If recreation and quality of life are important to your business, please spread the word! There are several ways you can help:

- **Display a poster in your window**
- **Make brochures available at your store/office**
- **Allow us to list your business as a campaign supporter**
- **Write a letter to the Task Force**
- **Adopt a Roadless Area**
- **Participate in media interviews or press conferences**
- **Attend the June 21 hearing**

I can provide more detailed information about each of these options, and I'm happy to answer any questions you might have. You can also find a wealth of information at our website, www.wrroadless.org.

Thank you for your help!

Citizens for Roadless Area Defense (C-RAD)



INFORMATION FOR BUSINESSES 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. Here are some suggestions for sending in your comments.

General guidelines

- In government processes like this one, form letters are all but dismissed. That’s why we’re supplying only guidelines and tips for writing comments, rather than a one-size-fits-all form letter.
- Printed letters are far more effective than emails, so if you can take the time to write a letter *on your company letterhead*, this goes a long way. But if you only have time for email, that works too!
- Be sure to include your name, business name and full address in the beginning of the letter, and don’t forget to sign it at the end.
- Send comments to the Keystone Center (an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization subcontracted to handle all correspondence with the Task Force) at the following address:

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

- You can also submit your comments online through the Keystone Center’s web page, www.keystone.org/html/roadless_areas_task_force.html. But as mentioned above, mailed letters tend to carry more weight with decision makers; also, the website form doesn’t allow you to retain or forward a copy of your comments.
- For maximum impact, be sure your letter is received by the Task Force *no later than June 21* (the date of the public hearing on the White River National Forest).
- We also urge you to submit a copy of your letter to C-RAD, as we’d like to maintain a file of all letters submitted to the Task Force. You can mail the letter to: C-RAD, PO Box 1257, Glenwood Springs, CO 81602, or email the letter to drjim@rof.net.
- Consider repackaging your letter as a letter to the editor of one or more local newspapers. This is a great way to inform other citizens and inspire them to write, too.

Tips for writing a really effective letter

- Make it clear that you’re writing on behalf of your company.
- Cite some figures that indicate the economic contribution of your business – dollar volume, number of employees, number of years in business, etc. For extra oomph, cite the regional, statewide or national size/importance of your industry. (We can help dig up statistics like this.)

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- Explain how your business depends on Roadless Areas for its livelihood.
 - If your company is a real estate agency, for example, you could discuss the links between the health of the real estate market and the quality of life ensured by Roadless Area protections (you might even take a stab at quantifying this).
 - If you're an outdoor equipment retailer, you could talk in terms of the importance of Roadless Areas to your customers (and therefore your sales).
 - If your business isn't directly reliant on Roadless Areas, you can still talk about the importance of Roadless Areas to the health and sustainability of the entire local/regional economy.
- List one or more values of Roadless Areas that your business depends on – e.g., economic, recreational, environmental – and explain why. You can find lots of informational grist in the Background section of our website, www.wroadless.org.
- Mention by name the Roadless Areas that are located near your community, describe what they mean to you, and make special mention of any RAs that your business or your customers particularly use (or, to put it another way, RAs whose loss of protected status would cause harm to your business). The website lists all inventoried RAs in the White River NF.
- Don't hesitate to speak from the heart – Roadless Areas have unquantifiable, even spiritual benefits, too. It's worth recounting personal stories of memorable experiences you've had in Roadless Areas.
- 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." And if you're so inclined, ask for protection for *all* of Colorado's Roadless Areas.
- 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.

Thank you so much for helping to protect our Roadless Areas!! For more information, go to www.wroadless.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
- 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

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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.

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.

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.

How can I join the Roadless Campaign?

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